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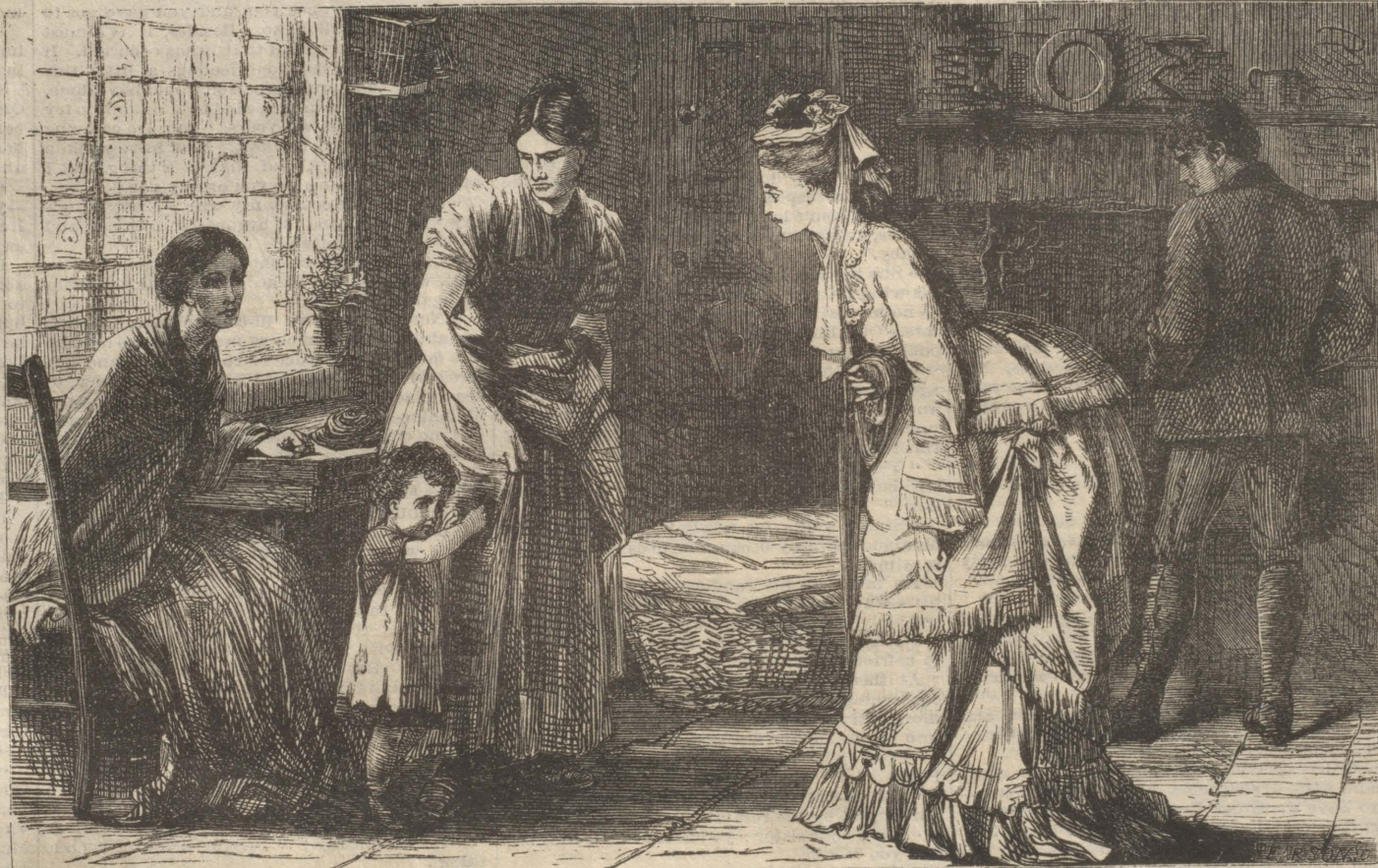
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this number.



"WHOSE CHILD IS THAT?" CRIES IRENE SUDDENLY.

"NO INTENTIONS."

BY FLORENCE MARRIAT.

Author of "Love's Conflict," "Veronique," etc.

CHAPTER VI.

"What is the reason that that woman is permitted to behave towards us as she does?"

Irene closes the dining-room with a loud slam as she speaks, and, as she turns to confront him again, Oliver Ralston sees that the pallor that overspread her features at the house-keeper's insulting speech has given way to a rosy flush of anger.

"Indeed I cannot tell you, Mrs. Mordaunt: I have asked myself the same question for years past, but never been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. But you are trembling: pray sit down—this scene as overcome you."

"Overcome me! How could it do else but overcome me? I have not been used to see servants assume the place of mistresses; and I feel, since I have come to Fen Court, as though the world were turned upside down. Mr. Ralston, do you know that the woman occupies one of the best rooms in the house?"

"I know it well! I was sent back to school once, in the midst of my holidays, for having had the childish curiosity to walk round it."

"That she lies in bed till noon," continues Irene, "and has her breakfast carried up to her; that she does nothing here to earn her living, but speaks of the house and servants as though they were her own property—"

"I can well believe it."

"And that she has actually refused to receive any orders from me."

"Not really!" exclaims Oliver Ralston, earnestly.

"Really and truly!"

"And what did my uncle say to it?"

"That I had better give my orders to the cook instead!"

There is silence between them for a few minutes, till Irene goes on, passionately:

"I could not bear it—I would not bear it—if it were not for Philip. But he is the very best and kindest man in the world, and I am sure he would prevent it if he could. Sometimes, Mr. Ralston, I have even fancied that he is more afraid of Quekett than any of us."

"It is most extraordinary," muses Oliver, "and unaccountable. That there is a mystery attached to it I have always believed, for the most quixotic devotion to a father's memory could hardly justify a man in putting up with insult from his inferiors. Why, even as a child, I used to remark the difference in my uncle's behavior towards me when Quekett was away. His manner would become quite affectionate."

"Doesn't she like you, then?"

"She hates me, I believe."

"But why?"

"I have not the least idea, unless it is that boys are not easily cowed into a deferential manner, and Mrs. Quekett always stood greatly on her dignity. Do you not see how frightened Aunt Isabella is of her?"

"Indeed I do. I waylaid her, only yesterday, going up to the old woman's room with the newspapers, that had but just arrived by the morning's post. I took them all back again. 'Not to-day's, if you please, Isabella,' I said. 'I should think yesterday's news was quite fresh enough for the servants' hall.' 'Oh! but Mrs. Quekett has always been accustomed,' she began—you know her funny way—but I had mine in the end. And Philip said I was right. He always does say so whenever I appeal to him. But why can't he get rid of her?"

"Why, indeed! Perhaps there is some clause attached to the conditions on which he holds the property, of which we know nothing. I suppose it will all come to light some day. Discussion is futile."

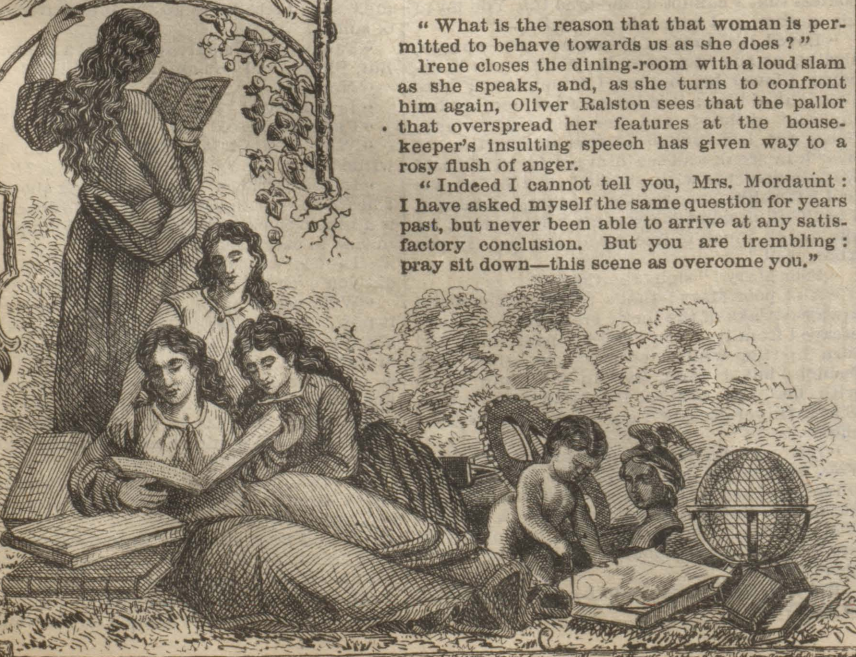
"I am not sure that it is right," replies Irene, blushing. "Perhaps I should not have spoken so freely as I have, but I was much annoyed. Whatever Colonel Mordaunt's reasons may be for keeping Mrs. Quekett, I am sure of one thing—that they are good and just, for he is of too upright and honorable a character to lend his hand to anything that is wrong."

"My uncle is a happy man to have so staunch a defender in his absence," says Oliver, admiringly.

"If his wife does not defend him, who shall?" she answers; "but all this time I am forgetting that you have had no refreshment, Mr. Ralston. What a careless hostess you must think me! Now, confess that you have had no dinner."

"Well, none that deserves that name, certainly."

"I thought so; but what can you expect, if



you go and stay at a wretched novel like the "Dog and Fox?" Let us see what the Court larder can produce," ringing the bell. "At all events, Mrs. Quekett shall not baulk us of our supper."

She orders the table to be spread, and in a very short time a substantial repast is placed before them, to which they sit down together, banishing the subject of Mrs. Quekett by mutual consent, until the Colonel shall return again, and chatting on such topics as are more consistent with their youth and relative positions.

At eleven o'clock the carriage wheels are heard grating on the gravelled drive, and Irene starts to her feet joyfully.

"Here he is," she cries. "Now we will have this matter set right for us."

Oliver also rises, but does not appear so confident: on the contrary, he remains in the background until the first salutations between Mrs. Mordaunt and the returning party are over. Then his uncle catches sight of him.

"Holloa! who have we here? Why, Oliver?"—with the slightest shade of annoyance passing over his face—"I had no idea you intended coming down so soon. Why didn't you say so in your letter? When did you arrive?"

But his wife gives him no time to have his question answered.

"Now, are you not pleased?" she exclaims. "Have I not done right? I met this gentleman in the shrubbery, Philip, smoking—all by himself; and, when I found he was your nephew, and was actually staying at that dirty little 'Dog and Fox'—fancy sleeping in that hole—I gave him an invitation to Fen Court on the spot, and made him come back with me. Now, wasn't I right?—say so!"—with her face in dangerous proximity to the Colonel's.

"Of course you were right, my darling—you always are," he replies, kissing her; "and I am very glad to see Oliver here. Have you—have you seen old Quekett?" he continues, in rather a dubious tone, turning to his nephew.

But Irene again interferences.

"Seen her, Philip—I should think we had seen her, and heard her into the bargain. She has been so horribly rude to us."

Colonel Mordaunt's face flushes.

"Rude! I hope not! Perhaps you misinterpreted what she said, Irene. You are rather apt to take offence in that quarter, you know, young lady."

"I could not possibly mistake her meaning; she spoke too plainly for that. Besides, Mr. Ralston was with me, and heard what she said. She as good as told him he was not a gentleman!"

Colonel Mordaunt grows scarlet.

"Oh! come! come! don't let us think or talk any more about an old woman's crotchety speeches."

"But, Philip, we must talk, because the worst is to come. I told her to have the Green Room prepared for Mr. Ralston, and she flatly refused to do so without your orders."

"Well, give her my orders, then!"

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing!" with a slight pout. "If mine are not to be obeyed, you must deliver your own. Meanwhile no room is ready for your nephew, and—our guest, remember!"

"Well, my darling, ring the bell, then, and tell them to get it ready," he answers, testily.

The bell resounds through the house.

"Order Quekett!"—Irene issues the command with a sharpness very foreign to her—"to have the Green Room prepared at once for Mr. Ralston. Remember the Green Room!"

As soon as the servant has disappeared, Colonel Mordaunt seems most anxious to drop the subject.

"Well, Oliver, and so you think of practising in the country, eh? That's not the road to fame, remember."

"I am afraid the road I am treading now, sir, will not lead me there either. A town life is too expensive and too full of temptation for such a weak fool as I am. I cannot resist it, therefore I must put it out of my way."

"That is true strength," says Irene, with kindling eyes. She is standing now against her husband, and has drawn one of his arms round her waist.

"But why seek work near Priestley—the worst possible place you could come to?"

"Only because I heard of it here. A Dr. Robertson, of Fenton, advertised for an assistant, and I thought it might be an opening. I saw him this morning."

"And have you decided anything?"

"Certainly not. Robertson and I like the looks of each other, and I think we should pull together. But I should not dream of settling anything until I had consulted you."

"Right! To-morrow I may be able to advise you: to-night I am too sleepy. Come, Irene, are you ready for bed?"

"Quite ready;" and the party separates. On her way upstairs, Irene peeps into the Green Room, half expecting to find it dark and deserted. But no; candles are burning on the toilet-table, towels and soap and other necessities are in their proper places, and a couple of rosy housemaids are beating up the pillows and making the bed. All is right so far; and Irene enters her own room, almost ready to believe that Mrs. Quekett must have repented of her hasty behavior.

Here she finds her husband waiting for her.

"Irene," he commences, gravely, "don't try and persuade young Ralston to remain here over to-night."

"Of course I will not, if it is against your wish, Philip. But I thought, in asking him, that I was only doing just what you would have done yourself."

"Oh, yes! it doesn't matter—I am glad enough to see the boy—only he might have timed his visit more conveniently. We shall be full next week, you know."

She does not know any such thing, nor does she heed it. Another mystery is troubling her now.

"Philip! why have you never told me about this nephew of yours?"

"I have told you, haven't I? Don't you remember my mentioning him one day at Weymouth?"

"I do; but it was only *en passant*. Yet he tells me he is your ward."

"Well, a kind of ward. I wish he were not"—with a sigh.

"Does he give you so much trouble?"

"A great deal, and has always done so. He leads much too fast a life, and his health has given way under it, and his morals. He drinks too much and smokes too much—he has even gambled. It is for this reason, chiefly, that I do not wish him to become intimate with you. I value my precious girl too much to expose her purity to contamination."

She slips her hand into his.

"Too hard a word, Philip. How could Mr. Ralston's company injure me? He is not likely to infect me with the vices you mention. But, if you alienate him from all respectable society, what incentive will he ever have to relinquish them? And he is an orphan, too! poor fellow!"

"You like him, Irene?"

"Yes; I like his face; it is open and candid. I like his manner, too, which is so entirely free from self-conceit. I feel that I should like to be a friend to him. Why should I not try?"

"You shall try, my darling—at least, when Quekett is gone to town. But, to tell you the truth, Irene, Oliver and she are sworn enemies, and there is no peace in the house whilst they are together."

"Why do you allow it, Philip?" says Irene, stoutly. "Why don't you tell that woman she must either respect your guests or go?"

"She doesn't look on Oliver as a guest," he replies, evasively. "She has known him from a baby."

"She has not known me from a baby," says his wife, bitterly; "and yet she speaks to me as no menial has ever presumed to speak before. Oh, Philip! if it were not for you, I couldn't stand it!"

"Hush! hush! my darling, it shall not occur again, I promise you. I shall speak to Quekett, and tell her I will not have you annoyed in this manner. You saw that I upheld your authority this evening."

"Yes, I did. Thank you for it, and I hope it will be a lesson to the old wretch, for I detest her!"

"Strong words for a lady!" laughs Colonel Mordaunt, simply because he does not echo the sentiment.

He takes up his candlestick, and moves a little way towards the door. Then he returns suddenly, bends over his wife, and kisses her.

"Thank you," he says, softly, "for wishing to befriend poor Oliver, my dear!"

At these words, what Mr. Ralston told her concerning his uncle's affection being more demonstrative at one time than another, rushes into her mind, and she says, abruptly:

"Did you love his mother very much, Philip?"

"His mother!" Colonel Mordaunt appears quite upset by the remark.

"Yes; your sister: you never had a brother, had you?"

"No! I never had a brother," he answers, vaguely.

"Then Oliver is your sister's child, I suppose. Which sister? Was she older than Isabella?"

"No! she was two years younger." Colonel Mordaunt has recovered himself by this time, and speaks quite calmly. "I had three sisters, Anne, Isabella, and Mary. Poor Mary made a runaway match and her father never spoke to her afterwards."

"Well!"

"When she was dying she wrote to me (she had always been my favorite sister, poor girl!), and asked me to go and see her. Of course I went (she had been a widow for more than a year then, and was living at Cannes), and stayed by her till the last. Then I returned home, and—brought Oliver with me."

"Her only child, of course."

"The only child—yes. My father would have nothing to say to the boy; he was a little chap of about two years old at the time, and so I kept him. What else could I do?"

"And have brought him up and educated him, and everything since. Oh, Philip, how good of you—how very kind and good! How I do love and admire you for it!" and she seizes her husband's head between her hands and gives it a good squeeze. On being released, Colonel Mordaunt appears very red and confused.

"Don't my darling, pray don't: I am not worthy of your pure affection; I wish I were. I have only done what common justice demanded of me."

"And you will let me help you to finish the task," says Irene. "I dare say all these things—the knowledge of his orphanhood and that his grandfather wouldn't acknowledge him—have weighed on his mind, poor boy, and driven him to the excesses of which you complain. Let us be his friends, Philip; good, firm, honest friends; ready to praise him when he is wrong—and you will see him a steady character yet. I am sure of it—there is something in the very expression of his face that tells me so."

Her husband catches her enthusiasm; thanks her again for the interest she displays on behalf of his nephew; and leaves her just in the mood to confront Mrs. Quekett and defeat her with her own weapons. And on the landing, outside the bedroom door, where she had probably been airing her ear at the keyhole, he intercepts her.

"Quekett!" he says, loftily, as she starts at his forthcoming, "I wish to say two words to you in my dressing-room. Be so good as to follow me."

He stalks to the hall of judgment majestically with his candlestick in his hand, and she follows in his train, but she will not stoop so low as to close the dressing-room door upon their entrance; and so the Colonel has to return and do it himself, which rather detracts from his assumption of dignity.

"Well, sir!" she commences from the chair in which she has, as usual, ensconced herself; "and what may your two words be? I have rather more than two to say to you myself; and as it's usual for ladies to come first, perhaps I'd better be the one to begin."

"You can do as you like," replies Colonel Mordaunt, whose courage is all oozing out of his fingers' ends at being shut up alone with the old beldame.

"My words won't take long to say, though they may be more than yours. It just comes to this, Colonel: you promised me Oliver shouldn't stay in this house again, and you've broke your promise, that's all."

"I promised you that his staying here should never inconvenience you, and you have got to prove that it will do so. Besides, it is almost entirely your own fault that it has occurred. If you had restrained your feelings a little this evening, as any prudent person would have done, you would not have excited Mrs. Mordaunt to try her influence against yours. You are carrying the game too far, Quekett. You have spoken rudely to my wife, and that is a thing that I cannot countenance in you or any one."

"Oh, yes; of course, my wife. Everything's my wife now: and let bygones be bygones, and all the past forgotten."

"I think bygones should be bygones, Quekett, when we can do no good by raking them up again."

"Not for our own ill-convenience, Colonel, certainly. But to such as me, who have held by one family for a space of thirty years, and suffered with it as the Lord alone knows how, to see a place turned topsy-turvy and the servants all helter-skelter to please the freaks of a young girl, no one can say but it's trying. Why there's not a chair or a table in that drawing-room that stands in the same place as it used to do; and as for the dinners, since she's been at what you call the head of your establishment, there's not been a dinner placed upon the table that I'd ask a workhouse pauper to sit down and eat with me!"

"Well, well, says Colonel Mordaunt, impatiently, "these are my grievances surely, and not yours. If you have no worse complaint to bring against Mrs. Mordaunt than this, I am satisfied. But what has it to do with your refusing to take her orders?"

"Her orders, indeed!" says the housekeeper, with a sniff.

"To follow the wishes, then, if you like the term better, with respect to so simple a thing as having one room or another prepared for her guests."

"The Green Room for Oliver," she interrupts, sarcastically; "I never heard of such a thing!"

"You at all events," he answers, sternly, "should be the last to raise an objection to it."

"But I do raise it, Colonel, and I shall. I say it's absurd to treat that lad as though he was a nobleman (why, you haven't a better room to put the Prince of Wales in, if he came to visit you); and then to think of that—"

"Be careful what you say, Quekett. Don't make me to angry. I shall stand up for Oliver Ralston!"

"Oliver Fiddlesticks!"

"Whatever the rest of the family may do; and you who talk so much of clinging to us and being faithful to our interests, should uphold, instead a fighting against me in this matter. I confess that I cannot understand it. You loved his mother, or I conclude you did—"

"Loved his mother!" echoes the woman, shrilly, as she rises from her chair; "it is because I loved his mother, Colonel, that I hate the sight of him; it is because I remember her innocent girlhood, and her blighted womanhood, and her broken-hearted death, that to hear him speak and see him smile, in his bold way, makes me wish she had died before she had left behind her such a mockery of herself. I can't think what she was after not to do it, for she hadn't much to live for at the last, as you know well."

"Poor Mary!" sighs the Colonel.

"Ah! poor Mary; that's the way the world always speaks of the lucky creatures that have escaped from it, I don't call her poor Mary, and turn up the whites of my eyes after your fashion; but I can't live in the same house with her son, and so I've told you before. Either Oliver goes, or I go. You can take your choice."

"But you are talking at random, Quekett. You have got a crotchet in your head about Oliver, just as you have a crotchet in your head about receiving Mrs. Mordaunt's orders, and one is as absurd as the other. Just try to look at these things in a reasonable light, and all would go smoothly."

But Mrs. Quekett is not to be smoothed down so easily.

"You can do as you please, Colonel, but my words stand. You have chosen to keep Master Oliver here."

"I could not have done otherwise without exciting suspicion; would you have me blab the story to all the world?" he says, angrily.

"Oh! if you go on in this way, Colonel, I shall blab it myself, and save you the trouble. As if it wasn't enough to have the Court pulled to pieces before my eyes, and to be spoken to as if I was the scum of the earth, without being crossed in this fashion. You told me just now, Colonel, not to make you too angry—don't you do the same by me, or I may prove a tougher customer than I've done yet. Now, do you mean to let Oliver stay on here, or no?"

"I shall let him remain as long as it seems proper to myself," replies her master, whose temper is now fairly roused.

The housekeeper can hardly believe her ears.

"You—will—let—him—remain!" she gasps. "And why don't you add, 'according to Mrs. Mordaunt's wishes?'"

"I do add it, Quekett—'according to Mrs. Mordaunt's wishes.' Mrs. Mordaunt is mistress here, and the length of her guests' visits will be determined by her desire. And whilst she is mistress here, remember that I will have her treated by you as a mistress, and not as an equal."

Quekett stares at him for a moment in silent surprise; and then the angry blood pumps up into her face, filling her triple chins until they look like the wattles of an infuriated turkey, and making her voice shake with the excitement that ensues.

"Very well, Colonel. I understand you. You have said quite enough," she replies, quivering.

"It is as well you should understand me, Quekett, and I ought to have said all this long before. You are angry now, but when you have had time to think over it, you will see that I am right."

"Very well, Colonel—that is quite sufficient—you will have no more trouble on my account, I can assure you; and with that Mrs. Quekett sweeps out of the dressing-room."

Colonel Mordaunt doesn't feel quite comfortable after her departure; it has been too abrupt to leave a comfortable impression behind it; but he consoles himself with the reflection that he has done what is right (not always a reflection to bring happiness with it, by the way, and often accompanied by much the same cold comfort presented by gruel, or any other nastiness that we swallow in order to do us good); and seeking Irene's presence again, sleeps the sleep of the just, trusting to the morning's light to dispel much of his foreboding.

The morning's light dispels it after this wise.

Between six and seven Irene is awakened by a strange sound at her bedside, something between the moaning of the wind and a cat's mew; and jumps up to find her sister-in-law standing there, looking as melancholy as a mute at a funeral, and sniffing into a pocket-handkerchief.

"Good gracious, Isabella! what is the matter? Is Philip—"

But no; Philip is occupying his own place of honor, and has not yet opened his eyes upon this wicked world.

"What is the matter? Are you ill?"

"Oh, no, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt; but Mrs. Quekett—I shouldn't have ventured in here, you may be quite sure—and here Isabella's virgin eyes are modestly veiled—"except that Mrs. Quekett is—oh! what will Philip say?"

"Is she dead?" demands Irene, with a lively interest not quite in accordance with the solemn inquiry.

"Dead! My dear Mrs. Mordaunt, no!"

"What is the row?" says her brother, now awake for the first time.

"Oh, Philip, Mrs. Quekett is gone."

"Gone! where to?"

"I don't know; but I think to London—to Lady Baldwin's—I tried to stop her, but I couldn't; she would go."

"Jubilate!" cries Irene, clapping her hands. "I am so glad. Is she really gone? It's too good to be true."

"Oh! but, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, she was so angry, and so unkind, she wouldn't even kiss me," says Isabella, relapsing into a fresh series of sniffs.

"Faugh!" replies Irene, "What a misfortune! But, Philip, had you any idea of this?"

"None!"

"Is it because of what occurred last night?"

"I am afraid so."

"Why afraid? We shall do much better without her. How did she go, Isabella?"

"In the carriage. I knew nothing about it till I heard the carriage drive up to the door. There is a nine o'clock train to London—I suppose she means to catch that!"

"In the carriage," repeats Irene; "Philip, did you ever hear of such impertinence?"

"Well, never mind, my darling; never mind it now," he replies, soothingly. "You see she always has been used to have the carriage to drive to the station in, on these occasions: it is not as though she were an ordinary servant, but it won't occur again—or, at all events, for some time," he adds, as a proviso to himself. "Did Quekett mention how long she is likely to be absent, Isabella?"

"No! she told me nothing—she would hardly speak to me—she was very, very crotchety," replies his sister.

"How I hope she may stay away for ever!" says Irene. "Come, Isabella, you must let me get up. It will be quite a new sensation to go down to breakfast and feel there is no chance of meeting that bird of evil omen on the stairs."

So Miss Mordaunt leaves her brother and sister-in-law to their respective toilets, and retires, quite overcome by Irene's boldness, and almost shaken in her faith respecting the power held by Mrs. Quekett over the inhabitants of Fen Court.

As, some minutes after, the Colonel is quietly enjoying his matutinal bath, he is almost startled out of his seven senses by a violent rapping against the partition which divides his dressing-room from his wife's bedroom.

"My dear girl, what is the matter?" he exclaims, as he feels his inability to rush to the rescue.

"Phillip! Phillip!" with a dozen more raps from the back of her hair-brush. "Look here, Phillip—may Oliver stay with us now?"

"Yes! yes!" he shouts, in answer, "as long as ever you like! Thank heaven, it's nothing worse," as he sinks back into his bath. "I really thought the old witch had repented of her purpose, and was down on us again!"

As a whole, the village of Priestley is not picturesque in appearance, but it has wonderfully romantic-looking bits scattered about it here and there, as what country village has not? Tumbledown cottages, belonging to landlords more "near" than thrifty, or rented by tenants whose weekly wages go to swell the income of the "Dog and Fox;" with untidy gardens attached to them, where the narrow paths have been almost washed away by the spring showers, until they form mere gutters for the summer rain, into which the heavy blossoms of the neglected rose-trees lie, sodden and polluted from the touch of earth. Or old-fashioned cottages, built half a century before, when bricks and mortar were not so scarce as now, and held together in a firmer union, and roofs were thatched instead of slated. Cottages with darker rooms, perhaps, than the more modern one possesses, because the casements are latticed with small diamond-shaped panes, of which the glass is green and dingy, but which can boast of wide fire-places and a chimney-corner (that inestimable comfort to the aged poor, who feel the winter's draughts as keenly as their richer brethren, and have been known to suffer from rheumatics), and cupboards to stow away provisions in, such as are never thought necessary to build in newer tenements. Such cottages as these have usually a garden as old-fashioned as themselves, surrounded by a low stone wall—not a stiff, straight wall, but a deliciously-irregular erection, with a large block left every here and there, to serve as a stepping-stone for such as prefer that mode of ingress to passing through the wicket, and of which fact stone-crop and creeping-jenny have seized base advantage, and taking root, increased in such profusion that it would be useless now to give them notice of eviction. Over the wall a regiment of various tinted hollyhocks rear their stately heads, interspersed here and there with a bright sunflower; whilst at their feet we find clove-pinks and thyme and southernwood and camomile flowers, and all the old-world darlings which look so sweet, and, in many cases, smell so nasty, but without which an old-world garden would not be complete.

All this is very nice, but it is not so wild and romantic as the other; indeed, as a rule, we may generally conclude that the most picturesque places to look at are the least comfortable to live in. Perhaps the cottage of all others in Priestley that an artist would select as a subject for his pencil would be that of Mrs. Cray, the laundress, and it is certainly as uncomfortable a home as the village possesses. It is not situated in the principal thoroughfare—the "street," as Priestly proudly calls it, on account, perhaps, of its owning the celebrated "Dog and Fox"—but at the extremity of a long lane which divides the little settlement into a cross. It is, indeed, the very last house before we pass into the open country, and chosen, doubtless, for its contiguity to the green fields which form the washerwoman's drying-grounds. It is a long, low, shambling building, more like a barn than a cottage, with windows irregularly placed, some in the thatched roof and others on a level with one's knees. It has a wide space in front, which once was garden, but is now only a tract of beaten-down earth, like a children's playground, as indeed it is. In the centre stands an old-fashioned well, large and deep, encircled by a high brink of stone-work, over which ivy grows with such luxuriance, that it endeavors to climb, and would climb and suffocate, the very windlass, were Mrs. Cray's boys and girls not constantly employed in tearing it ruthlessly away. At the side of the well is the pig-sty, but the pigs share the playground with the children, rout away amongst the ivy, snuff about the open door, try to drink out of Mrs. Cray's washing-tubs, and make themselves generally at home. On a line stretching from the cottage to the gate above the heads of this strange company flutter a variety of white and coloured garments, like the flags on a holiday-dressed frigate; whilst the projecting wooden porch—a very bower of greenery—contains several evidences of the trade which is being driven within.

"The old home! How little she has thought of it of late! Yet she can see it in her mind's eye, as she stands pondering his words. It was not a particularly happy home to her—the homes of the poor seldom are. She had known hunger and thirst and cold, and occasionally, the sound of harsh words within its limits, yet the memory of the dull life she led there seems very peaceful now, compared to the excited and stormy scenes through which she has passed since leaving it."

Yes! it was of this old home that Myra had had been thinking three years ago, when Joel Cray stood beside her in the fields of Fretterley, and urged her to return with him. It was to this old home she flew for refuge from the bitter knowledge of her lover's want of love for her, and it is in this old home that we now meet with her again.

It is at the close of a long, hot September day, and she is sitting by the open window—not attired as we saw her last, in a robe of costly material, with her hair dressed in the prevailing fashion, and gold ornaments gleaming in her ears on her breast. Myra is arrayed in cotton now: the shawl, which is still pinned about her shoulders, is of black merino, and the hat, which she has just cast upon the table, is of black straw, and almost without trimming. Yet there is a greater change in the woman than could be produced by any quality of dress—a change so vivid and startling, to such as have not seen her during this interval of three years, as to draw off the consideration from everything except herself.

Her face has fallen away to half its former size, so that the most prominent features in it are her cheek-bones, above which her large dark eyes gleam feverishly and hollow. Her hair, which used to be so luxuriant, now poor and thin, is pushed plainly away behind her ears; whilst her lips are colorless, and the bloodless appearance of her complexion is only relieved by two patches of crimson beneath her eyes, which make her look as though she had been rouged. Her shape, too, once so round and buxom, has lost all its comeliness: her print gown hangs in folds about her waist and bosom, and she has acquired a stoop which she never had before. Eight-and-twenty—only eight-and-twenty on her birth-day passed, and brought to this! But, as she gazes vacantly at the patch of ground in front of her aunt's cottage, she is not thinking of her health—people who are dangerously ill seldom do: yet her thoughts are bitter. The children are playing there—five children between the ages of eight and fourteen, belonging to Mrs. Cray, and a little nurse-child of which she has the charge. The latter—an infant who has not long learned to walk alone—escapes from his guardian, who is the youngest of the Crays, and attempts to climb the ivy-covered brink of the well: more, he manages to hoist his sturdy limbs up to the top, and to crawl towards the uncovered pit. His guardian attempts to gain hold of one of his mottled legs; he kicks resistance; she screams, and the scream arouses Myra from her dream. She has just been thinking how little life is worth to any one: she sees life in danger of being lost, and flies to preserve it. As she reaches the well, and seizes hold of the rebellious infant, her face is crimson with excitement.

"Tommy would do it!" explains Jenny, beginning to whimper with the fright.

The infant doesn't whimper, but still kicks vigorously against the sides of his preserver.

Myra throws down the wooden lid, which ought at all times to keep the well covered; presses Tommy passionately against her breast; then putting him down, with a good cuff on the side of his head, to teach him better for the future, walks back into the cottage, panting.

"Why did I do it?" she thinks, as she leans her exhausted frame upon the table. "What's the good of life to him, or me, or any one? We had much better be all dead together!"

"Hollo, Myra!" exclaims the voice of her cousin Joel, "what, you're back again, are you? Well! I'm right glad to see you, lass, though I can't say as you look any the better for your going."

He has come in from his daily labour, through the back kitchen, and how stands before her, with his rough, kind hands placed upon her shoulders.

"Let me look in your face, my dear, and read what it says! No news. I thought as much. Didn't I tell you so before ever you went?"

"And if an angel had told me so," she says, passionately, "do you think I should have listened to what he said? What's health, or wealth, or peace, or anything to me, compared to the chance of finding him again, and seeing myself righted? And yet you blame me because I can't make up my mind to part with it—the only thing the world has left me."

"I blame you, my dear? God forbid! Only you can't expect me to see you wasting all your life running after a shadder, without warning you of the consequences. You'll wear yourself out, Myra."

"There's a deal left to wear out," she answers.

"Well, you're not so strong as you ought to be, and you know it; all the more reason you should hearken to what your friends tell you. This makes the sixth time you've been on the tramp after that 'Amilton.'"

"Don't speak his name!" she says, quickly; "I can't bear it."

"Why don't you forget it, then?" he answers, almost savagely, as he deposits his tools in a corner of the room.

"Oh, Joel!" she wails, rocking herself backwards and forwards, "I can't forget it—I wish I could. It seems written in letters of fire wherever I turn. There have I been toiling away for the last three months (I took the accounts at a large West-end shop this time), and walking myself off my legs between whiles, and yet I can't hear anything. I believe I've been to the house of every Hamilton in London, but it only ended in disappointment. I've spent all my money, and had to sell my clothes off my back to get home again into the bargain—and here I am, just as I went!" And Myra throws her head down on her outstretched arms, and falls to sobbing.

The sobs melt Joel's honest heart.

"My poor lamb!" he says, tenderly, "you'd better give it up once and for all—it bean't of no manner of use. And suppose you found him, now!—just suppose, is he the man to right you?"

"Oh! I don't know—I don't know," she says, amidst her tears.

"Yes, you do know; only you haven't the courage to speak out. He was sick of you three years ago; he told you as much; is he likely to be sweet on you now?"

But to this question there comes no answer but her sobs.

"I was sweet on you long before that, Myra," continues her cousin, presently, in a low voice; "but I ain't changed towards you. Why won't you let me mend this business. There ain't much difference between one man and another, but there's a deal to a woman in an honest name; and that's what I'll give you to-morrow, my dear, if you'll only make up your mind to it."

"Don't, Joel! pray don't!"

"Are you never going to have another answer for me save that? One would think I wanted to do you a harm by marrying you. 'Tain't every one as would do it, Myra; but I know all, and yet I says again, I'll make an honest woman of you to-morrow, if you choose to be my wife."

"I can't—indeed I can't!"

"That ain't true! You could do it well enough, if you chose," replies Joel, moving a little away from her.

"Lor, Myra! are you back again?" interrupts the coarse voice of Mrs. Cray, as she appears at the kitchen door, with her sleeves tucked up to her steaming arms and hands upon her canvas apron; "when did you reach?"

"About an hour ago," says the girl, wearily.

"And no wiser than you went, I reckon?"

"No wiser than I went!"

"In course not: you're a fool for going. Trapsing about the country in that fashion after a wild-goose chase, when you ought to stop at home and look after the children!"

"I shall stop, now."

"I'm glad to hear it, I'm sure. I've been worked to death, between the brats and the linen, since you went. And there's been fine changes up at the Court, too. The Colonel's brought home his lady! and a nice-looking creature she is, so I hear (Joel's seen her—he can tell you); and old Mother Quekett's gone off in a huff. So much the better; I don't wish her good luck, for one; and if I see a chance of getting back the Court washing, why, I shall do it, particular if the Colonel's lady is what Joel seems to think her. Why, Joel, lad, what's up with you?—you look as if you'd had a crack on the head."

"You'd better ask Myra," replies Joel, sullenly.

"Why, you're never at logger-heads again, and she not home an hour! Here, Polly, lass, bring Tommy over to me, and go and see about setting out tea in the back kitchen. The kettle ain't filled yet. And you sit quiet there," she continues, to the unfortunate Tommy, as she bumps him handsomely down on the stone floor to enforce her command, and leaves him there whimpering. At the sound of the child's voice, Myra raises her eyes quickly, and glances at him, then turns away, with a heavy sigh, and resumes her former position.

"What's up between you?" demands Mrs. Cray of her niece, when she has time to revert to the subject in hand. "I suppose Joel don't like your ways of going on, and so you're huffed at it."

"It isn't that," replied Myra. "Joel wants me to do what's impossible, and he's angry because I tell him so."

"I wants her to be my wife, mother—that's the long and short of it. I want her to give up running back-wards and forwards after a will-o'-the-wisp (for if she found that fine gentleman as her mind is bent upon to-morrow, he'd no more marry her than he would you), and bide here at Priestley, and bring up an honest man's children. She knows as I've hankered after her for years, and that I'd make her a good husband, and never throw nothing of what's gone in her teeth. But she puts me off with saying it's impossible. What do you think of that?"

"I think she must be out of her mind not to jump at it. Why, here comes as good a fellow as ever worked for his bread, and offers to be-mean himself by looking over all your tricks and making an honest woman of you, and you won't have him. You must be mad!"

"Perhaps I am, aunt; but I can't help it."

"Don't talk such rubbish—(sit down when I tell you, will yer?—or I'll give yer something to remember me by!)" This *par parenthèse* to the little scapegoat Tommy, who has dared to rise. Mrs. Cray does not only promise—she performs; and the child does not whimper this time—he roars.

Myra springs up hastily and snatches him from her aunt's hands.

"How can you be so cruel? You treat him like a dog!"

"Well, he ain't of much more value, nor half so much use. He cumburs up the place terrible, and is a deal of trouble with his violent ways. I've said more than once lately that he's more bother than he's worth."

"Any ways, you're paid for him," retorts the other.

"Do you think I'd keep him without?"

"Well, you might give a little feeling for the money, then. You'll split the child's head open some days."

"And a good job, too, if I did. He ain't likely to be missed."

The younger woman's breast heaves, but she does not answer.

Joel tries to make peace between them.

"Come! don't you think no more about it, Myra. His 'ed ain't split this time, and mother says more than she means."

"I don't know that, Joel," says Mrs. Cray. "If she scorns you, nothing can't be too hard for her."

"Nothing has ever been too hard for me—in your opinion," replies Myra. "I wish I was gone, and out of it all—that I do! Oh, my God!"—and with that commences weeping afresh. But her weakness is soon interrupted by her aunt's hurried remonstrance.

"Come, now! shake yourself up girl! There's quality coming up the path. Here, Joel! who can it be?"

"Blest if it ain't the Colonel's lady!"

And before they have time to do more than realise the fact, Irene's tap has sounded on the half-opened door, and her voice is asking for admission. Joel, very red in the face, stands bolt upright against the chimney-place. Myra hastily passes her hand across her eyes, and turns her head another way; whilst Mrs. Cray advances to receive the visitor with her forgiven nurse-child hiding his head in her skirts.

"Are you Mrs. Cray?" demands Irene.

"Yes, mum," Mrs. Cray, remembering her last interview with Mrs. Quekett, and ignorant as to what dealings the Court people may how wish to have with her, is rather stiff and reserved at first, and stands upon her dignity.

"I have come to ask if you can do me a favor, Mrs. Cray. I have some friends staying with me who want some muslin dresses got up in a hurry for a flower-show at Fenton, and the Court laundress cannot undertake to let us have them by Wednesday. Could you?"

"Well, that depends a deal upon what they are like, mum," replies Mrs. Cray; whereupon follows a vivid description of puffs and flounces and laces, quite unnecessary to the well-doing of my story.

"I don't see why I shouldn't give you satisfaction, mum," is the laundress's concluding sentence; "for it won't be the first time as I've worked for the Court gentle-folk by a many."

"Indeed! I never heard your name till this afternoon, when my maid mentioned it to me."

"That's likely enough, mum. I don't suppose you would go to hear it mentioned; but I worked for the Court for four years all the same. And it was a hard day for me, with all my poor children (six of them, if there's ones), when I got turned away for asking my due."

"Who turned you away, Mrs. Cray?"

"Why, bless you, mum, Mrs. Quekett, as was mistress of the Court then—who else should have done it?—and only because I wanted my three weeks' money, as I believe was lining her own pockets all the time. It's been a heavy loss to me, mum. But where's the use of talking, when a woman like that—who as no one in the village has a good word for, is queen, and nothing less? You'll hardly believe it, mum, but she ordered me straight out of the house then and there, and forbid even the servants to send me their bits of things—and that was a couple or more pounds a quarter out of my pocket, let alone the other."

Irene grows rather red during this harangue, and stands with her eyes on the floor, trying to break the tip of her parasol by digging it into a dusty crevice between the flags. She does not relish hearing this common woman speak the truth, and as soon as there is a break in the conversation she resents it.

"Well, Quekett is not mistress of the Court now, Mrs. Cray, as I suppose I need not tell you; and her likes and dislikes are nothing whatever to me. We shall often have friends staying with us, and the washing is likely to be more than our laundress can do. At all events, I can promise you shall have back the servants' linen; and, if I am satisfied with the way in which you get up the dresses I speak of, you shall have some of mine also."

"Oh! thank you, mum, kindly. I saw you was a real lady the minute I set eyes on you; and as for my son there, who's seen you a many times, 'Mother,' he says to me—"

"Yes, yes!" interrupts Irene, anxious to cut short so embarrassing an eulogium; "and I shall be sure to have the dresses by Wednesday, shall I not?"

"We can let the lady have them by Wednesday, can't we, Myra?" says Mrs. Cray, appealing to her niece. "This is Monday, and you feels well enough to help, don't you?"

"Yes, I'll help," is the listless answer.

"Is that your daughter? Is she ill?" demands Irene.

"She's my niece, mum, and but a poor creature just now—there's no denying of it."

"Indeed she does look very ill," said Irene, sympathizingly, as she approaches Myra's side, and gazes with sad interest at the girl's hollow cheeks and staring eyes in which the traces of tears are still visible. "Do you suffer any pain?"

At first Myra is disposed to answer rudely, or not at all. This is sensitively alive to the fact of her altered appearance, and always ready to take umbrage at any allusion made to it; but she looks up into the sweet, kind face that is bent over hers, and feels forced to be courteous even against her own will.

"None now—sometimes I do!"

"Where is it? You do not mind my asking, do you? Perhaps I might send you something that would do you good."

"Here!" replied Myra, pressing her hand just below her collar-bones, "at night, when the cough's bad, and I can't sleep for it. I some-

times feel as though I should go mad with the pain here."

"And what kind of a pain is it?"

"It's just a gnawing—nothing more; and I'm a little sore sometimes."

"And she can't eat nothing, poor dear," interposes Mrs. Cray. "She turns against meat and pudding as though they was poison; but she drinks water by the gallon. I'm sure the buckets of water as the girl have drunk—"

"And does not washing make you worse?" again inquires Irene.

"Sometimes; but I don't stand at it long—I can't."

"And how do you employ your time, then, Myra?"

"I'm just home from a job in London, ma'am. I'm good at keeping accounts, and such like—it's what I've been brought up to; but it tried me rather this hot weather, and I'm glad to be back in Priestley again."

"She ain't fit for nothing of that sort now," interposes Mrs. Cray.

"I dare say not. She must take care of herself till she gets stronger," says Irene, cheerfully. "I will send you some soup from the Court, Myra—perhaps that will tempt you to eat. And are you fond of reading? Would you like to have some books?"

"Oh, she's a fine scholar, mum," again puts in Mrs. Cray. "Many and many's the time I've thought we'd given her too much learning; but her poor uncle that's dead and gone used to say—'Here she interrupts herself to give her skirts a good shake. Get out of that, do, you varmint! What do you mean by hanging on to me after that fashion?'—which adjuration is succeeded by the appearance of Tommy's curly head and dirty face in the full light of day."

"Whose child is that?" cries Irene suddenly. The question is so unexpected, that no one seems inclined to answer it. Joel changes feet awkwardly upon the hearth, which he has never quitted, and Myra turns round in her chair and looks full into Irene's face, whose eyes are riveted upon the child, still clinging for protection to the skirts of his nurse.

Mrs. Cray is the first to find her tongue.

"What! this boy, mum, as is hanging on my gown in this ill-convenient fashion?—but for! children will be children," she continues, as she puts her hand on Tommy's head and pushes him forward for Irene's better inspection. "Well, he's not mine, though I look on him most as my own. To tell truth, he's a nuss-child."

"A nurse-child! You are paid for keeping him; but who, then, are his parents?"

"They're very respectable people mum—quite gentlefolks, as you may say. I think his pa's in the grocery line; but I couldn't speak for certain. My money is paid regular, and that's all I have to look after."

"Oh, of course—of course. And—what is his name?"

"He's called Tommy, mum. Go and speak to the lady, Tommy."

"But his surname?"

"Well, we haven't much call here to use his other name, mum; and I'm sure it's almost slipped my memory. What's the name as the gentleman writes as owns of Tommy, Joel?" she continues, appealing in rather a conscious manner, to her son.

"I don't know. You'd better ask Myra," he replies, gruffly.

"Brown," says Myra, quickly; "the child's name is Brown. You might go to remember as much as that, aunt."

"Oh, it doesn't signify," interrupts Irene, who perceives she has stumbled on an unwelcome subject, "it is of no consequence;" and then, in her fresh summer dress, she kneels down on the uncovered stone floor, that has been trampled by dusty feet all day long. "Come here, Tommy. Won't you come and speak to me? Look at the pretty things I have here;" and she dangles her watch-chain, with its bunch of glittering charms, before his eyes.

Tommy cannot resist the bait; curiosity casts out fear; and in another moment his deep blue eyes are bent greedily upon the flashing baubles, whilst his dirty little fingers are leaving their dull impress upon pencil-case and locket and seal.

"Oh, dear! mum, he ain't fit as you should touch him; and his feet are trampling the edge of your gown. Here, Jenny, make haste and put Tommy under the pump till the lady looks at him."

"No, no! pray don't; he is doing no harm." So the dirty little brat is left in peace, whilst the lady takes stock of his eyes and mouth and hair. Once, in his ecstasy at finding a gold fish amongst her treasures, he raises his eyes suddenly to hers, and she darts forward as suddenly and kisses him. Then, becoming aware that she has done something rather out of the common, and that Mrs. Cray and Joel and Myra are looking at her with surprise, Irene rises to her feet, dragging the bunch of charms far out of the disappointed Tommy's reach, and, with a heightened color, stammers something very like an apology.

"I like little children," she says, hurriedly; "and—and—he has very blue eyes. Are you fond of lollipops, Tommy?"

"I want the floss," says Tommy, from behind Mrs. Cray's gown again.

"Oh fie! then you can't have it. Now be've yourself, or I'll give you a good hiding," is the gentle rejoinder.

Irene feels very much inclined to give him the "floss," but has sufficient sense to know it would be a very foolish thing to do; so she takes a shilling out of her purse instead.

"See, Tommy! a beautiful bright new shilling! Won't you go and buy some lollipops with it?"

Tommy advances his hand far enough to grab the coin, and then retreats in silence.

"Say 'thankye' to the lady," suggests Mrs. Cray.

But Tommy is dumb.

"Say 'thankye' at once; d'ye hear?" and a good shake is followed by an equally good cuff on the small delinquent's head.

"Oh! don't strike him," cries Irene, earnestly—"pray don't strike him; he is but a baby. Poor little Tommy! I am sure he will say thank you, when he knows me better."

"You're too good to him, mum; you can't do nothing with children without hitting 'em now and then: which you will find when you have a young family of your own."

"I must go now. My friends are waiting for me," says Irene, whose color has risen at the first at the last allusion. "Good evening, Mrs. Cray! Send up for the dresses to-night; and the cook shall give you some soup at the same time, for your niece."

But she has not long stepped over the threshold, before Myra is after her; and they meet by the ivy-covered well.

"You'll—you'll—be coming this way again, won't you?" says the girl, panting even with that slight effort.

"If you wish it, certainly. Would you like me to come and see you, Myra?"

"Very much! There are few faces here look at me as yours does."

"My poor girl! then I will come, with the greatest pleasure."

"Soon?"

"Very soon." And so they part: and Irene joins Mary Cavendish and Oliver Ralston, who have been walking up and down the green lane outside the cottage, waiting for her.

"What a time you've been?"

"Have I? There's a poor young woman there in a consumption, or something of the sort, who interested me. And such a dear little child: a nurse-child of Mrs. Cray's. I stayed to talk to them."

"How long is it since you have developed a love for children, Irene?" says Mary Cavendish laughing. "I did not think they were at all in your line."

"I never disliked them; and this baby has such beautiful earnest eyes."

"It is remarkable what lovely eyes some of the children of the poor have. I remember, when I was in Berwick—"

"Let us get over the stile here; it leads to the Court by a much shorter way," exclaims Irene, interrupting her cousin in the rudest manner in the world. But so is Miss Cavendish always interrupted if she ventures to make the slightest reference to her visit of the summer. She has been dying, heaps of times, to relate all the glories of that period to Irene, but she has never been able to advance farther than the fact that they took place. The mere name of Berwick is sufficient to send Mrs. Mordaunt out of the room or—as in the present instance—over the stile.

Irene cannot get the remembrance of poor Myra's hollow features and attenuated figure out of her head. It forms the staple subject of her conversation at the dinner-table, and she talks of it all the evening, while her guests are rambling about the gardens and shrubbery; and she is sitting on a bench with her husband in the dusk, and flirting with him in her little quiet way.

"It is very sad," says Colonel Mordaunt for about the fiftieth time, "and I'm very glad that you should have fallen in with her, my dear. It is in such cases that the rich can do so much to help the poor. Sickness is bad enough to bear when we are surrounded by every luxury; it must be twice as hard when one is deprived of the necessities of life." And he continues to puff solemnly into the evening air, while his arm tightens round the waist of his wife.

"Yes," says Irene, leaning up against him, "and you should see how thin and pale she is, Philip. Her bones look as though they were coming through her skin. And she has no appetite, her aunt says. I have ordered cook to send her down some soup and jelly."

"Quite right. I am afraid you would find several more in the same condition if you were to look for them. Country poor are too proud to beg."

"I will make a point of looking. But I never saw any one so terribly thin before. And her eyes are hollow, poor thing!"

"You seem to have taken a great fancy to this girl, Irene."

"She has awakened a great interest in me, though I cannot tell why. She seems more than ill—she looks unhappy."

"And have you told Colonel Mordaunt about the child you took such a fancy to?" laughs Mary Cavendish, who is loitering near enough to hear the last words. "It's a new thing for Irene to be running after babies—Isn't it, Colonel Mordaunt?"

Irene flushes; it is not so dark but he can see the change, and a new tenderness creeps over him.

"What baby, darling?" he says, as he presses her closer to him. Irene is vexed at the turn in the conversation; she is not a bit sentimental, and she cannot affect to be so.

"It was not a baby," she replies, almost curtly: "it was a big child of two or three years old."

"And you took a fancy to it—why?"

Colonel Mordaunt's "why" has a totally different bearing to the "why" that falls upon

Irene's ears. She grows scarlet, and almost starts away from him.

"Why!—why!—For no particular reason—only—because—I don't care for children in general, I know—but—but—"

Whilst she is stammering out a reasonable answer, her husband supplies it.

"But you thought," he whispers close into her ear, "that some day you might possess such a child of your own, Irene!"

"I—I thought—Good heavens, no! I never thought anything of the kind," she exclaims aloud; and then, out of sheer nervousness, she laughs. The laughs grates on Colonel Mordaunt's ear; he draws himself away, not offended, but hurt.

"If such a prospect holds no charms for you, Irene, you might keep the unpleasant truth to yourself. It is not necessary to laugh at me."

"Laugh!—did I laugh?" she replies, still titling. "I'm sure I didn't know it. I don't think I quite know what I did do." And with this, the incomprehensible creature falls to crying, not heavily, but in a smart little shower of tears that savor strongly of the hysterical. Colonel Mordaunt does not know what to make of it; he has been little used to women, and this one seems to him, at times, a mystery; but he adopts the safe course: he throws his arms about her neck and begs her not to think any more about it. And, apparently, Irene adopts his advice, for she dries her eyes, and flits away from his side, and the next minute he hears her light laugh ringing out through the shrubbery at some jest of Oliver Ralston's.

They are a very happy party at Fen Court now; even Isabella Mordaunt seems to have crept out of her shell, and to dare to enjoy herself after a demurely quiet fashion; and as for Colonel Mordaunt, he has been a different man since rid of the presence of the awful Mrs. Quekett. Not that he was quite himself for some days after the housekeeper's summary departure. A gloomy dread seemed hanging over him at that time, for which Irene was unable to account. But at the end of a fortnight, Mrs. Quekett's temper having evaporated with change of air, she thought fit to send her master a letter, written as though nothing unpleasant had happened between them, which intimated her whereabouts, and wound up with her compliments to his "good lady."

Colonel Mordaunt's mind was instantly relieved; and the next post took back a lengthy epistle in reply. Irene saw neither of these letters, nor wished to do so; but she could not help observing how much more at ease her husband appeared to be after receiving and despatching them.

And with the fears of Mrs. Quekett's everlasting displeasure lifted off his mind, Colonel Mordaunt became pleasanter and more lively than she had seen him since their marriage. He petted Irene all day long, chaffed Isabella, and appeared thoroughly to enjoy the companionship of Oliver, as though, in the affection of these three, he had all he desired in this life to make him happy.

His wife had begun to wish that it could go on thus for ever, and that they had no friends coming to break in upon their domestic felicity. But the guests have arrived, and the unruffled intercourse is continued, and Irene is being carried quietly along the stream of life as though she had left all its storms behind her, and there were no black clouds gathering in the future.

Colonel Mordaunt is of an exceedingly benevolent nature; he takes great interest in the poor of the parish, and never neglects an opportunity of sympathising with or relieving them; but after a while he does grow very sick of the name of Myra Cray. It appears as though his wife were always harping on it; every topic, from whatever point started, veers round, in some mysterious manner, to the sick girl at the laundress's cottage; and whenever he misses Irene, he is sure to hear that she has "just run down" to the end of the village with a book, or a pudding. At last he grows fidgety on the subject.

"You are, surely, never going out in this broiling sun!" he exclaims, one hot morning in October, as he meets his wife arrayed for walking, a basket of fruit on one arm, and a bottle of wine under the other. "I cannot allow it, Irene. You will get fever or something of the sort: you must wait till the day is cooler."

"Oh, I can't wait, Philip," she says, coaxingly, "for poor Myra is so much worse. She broke a bloodvessel last night, and they have just sent up to tell me so."

"What good can you do by going down?"

"I don't know: but I think she will feel my presence to be a comfort: she has taken a great fancy to me, you know. Besides, I want to carry her a few grapes."

"Send them by a servant. I cannot have you risk your health by encountering such fatigue for any one."

"It will not fatigue; and I want to see Myra myself."

"Take the pony-chaise, then."

"No, indeed! before you lazy grooms will have put the harness together, I shall be by her bed-side." And running past him, she takes her way down to the village.

Colonel Mordaunt is vexed. He likes his wife to be interested in the parishioners, but her visits of late have been confined to the Crays—who are generally considered to be the least deserving of them all. Besides, he argues, the house is full of guests, to whom she owes more attention than is consonant with absenting herself from their company at all hours of the day. When they meet at luncheon, consequently, he

is what is termed a little "put out; but she is too full of her *protégée* to notice it."

"Poor Myra!" she sighs, as she takes her seat at the table. "I am afraid there is little hope for her; she is so weak, she cannot speak above a whisper."

"She oughtn't to be allowed to speak at all, having broken a bloodvessel," says her husband, shortly. "Will you take a cutlet, Irene?"

"No—nothing, thank you. I couldn't eat; my whole mind is absorbed by the thought of that poor girl."

"But you are not going to allow it to spoil your luncheon, are you? Running about all the morning, and eating nothing on the top of it. The end of it will be, you will be ill."

"Not while there is work for me to do—as there ever is."

"Nonsense! you talk of it as though it were a duty. It is a much greater duty for you to eat when your husband asks you to do so."

"Don't ask me then, dear Philip; for I really can't."

He does not press her, but direct his attention to the rest of the company; whilst she leans back in her chair, pale, pensive, and almost entirely silent.

"You won't go out again?" he says to her, as the meal is concluded and they rise from table.

"Oh no! I don't think so."

"Go, then, and lie down, my dear. You have been too much excited. I never saw you more overcome."

"I think I will lie down, just for an hour or two. My head aches terribly."

Then this trifling annoyance vanishes, and he is all sympathy and tenderness; supporting her upstairs with his arm around her waist, and coaxing and petting her like a sick child, until she has exchanged her dress for a cool wrapper, and laid down on her bed: when he steps about the room, on tiptoe, like a woman, pulling down the blinds and putting everything within her reach that he thinks she may require.

"I shall be back by six, my own darling," he whispers, in farewell; "and I hope you will have had a good sleep by that time."

"I dare say I shall," she murmurs, dreamily; and then he leaves her. At the appointed hour he is back again, and entering the room cautiously, for fear of starting her, finds all the blinds drawn up, and Phoebe sitting by the open window, stitching a rent in one of her mistress's dresses.

"Mrs. Mordaunt gone down?" he says, interrogatively.

"Yes, sir. I believe she's gone out, sir."

"Out! Not out of doors again?"

"I think so, sir. A message came up from Cray's for my missus, about four o'clock, and she put on her things at once and went to them. I believe the young woman's sent for her, sir."

"Too bad! too bad!" exclaims Colonel Mordaunt, angrily—though referring more to the Crays than to Irene. "But I suppose she will be back to dinner."

"I suppose so, sir. My missus said she would wear a white muslin this evening, and I was just stitching this one together for her."

But dinner-time arrives, and they are all assembled in the dining-room, and still the mistress of the house is absent.

"It is close upon seven: she must be here directly," remarks Colonel Mordaunt, though uneasily.

"A note from Cray's if you please, sir," says the footman, placing a crumpled piece of paper before him.

He opens it and reads:

"DEAR PHILIP,—"

"Pray don't wait dinner for me. It is impossible that I can come home just yet."

"Yours,

"IRENE."

"Serve the dinner at once!" exclaims Colonel Mordaunt, in a voice of real displeasure, as he tears up the note into a dozen fragments and casts them into the empty grate behind him.

CHAPTER VII.

Meanwhile Irene, unconscious how her work of charity will influence her future, is sitting with a trembling heart by the bedside of the laundress's niece. She is unused to sickness or to death, but she knows now that the one can only vanish hence before the presence of the other; for the parish doctor met her, on her entrance to the cottage, and answered her questions about Myra with the utmost frankness.

"She may linger," he said doubtfully, "but it is more likely that she will not. She has been breaking up for some time past, and has not sufficient strength to rally from this last attack. I shall be here again in the morning; but as I can do her no good, it would be useless my staying now." And the doctor mounted his stout cob and trotted off in another direction.

Irene stood watching him till he was out of sight, and then turned into the cottage with a sigh. When the doctor leaves the house in which a patient lies in *extremis*, it seems as if death had already entered there.

There is no cessation of business in Mrs. Cray's dwelling, though her niece does lay dying. People who work hard for their daily bread cannot afford time for sentiment; and the back kitchen is full of steam and soapsuds, and the washerwomen are clanking backwards and forwards over the wet stones in their pattens, to wring and hang out the linen; and the clatter of tongues and rattling of tubs and noise

of the children are so continuous that Irene has difficulty at first in making herself heard. But the child who took the message up to the Court has been on the look-out for her, and soon brings Mrs. Cray into the front kitchen, full of apologies for having kept her waiting.

"I'm sure it's vastly good of you, mum, to come down a second time to-day; and I hope you don't think I make too free in sending up the gal's message to you; but she has been that restless and uneasy since you left her this morning, that I haven't been able to do nothing with her, and the first words she says, as I could understand, was, 'Send for the lady!'"

"Poor thing!" is Irene's answer. "I am afraid the doctor thinks very badly of her, Mrs. Cray."

"Badly of her! Lor', my dear lady, she's marked for death before the week's over, as sure as you stand there. Why she's bin a fighting for her breath all day, and got the rattle in her throat as plain as ever I heard it."

"Oh, hush! your voice will reach her," remonstrates Irene; for the laundress is speaking, if anything, rather louder than usual.

"It can't make much difference if it do, mum, and it'll come upon her all the harder for not knowing it beforehand. It's my Joel I think of most, for his heart's just wrap up in his cousin; and what he'll do when she's took, I can't think. And I haven't had the courage to tell him it's so near, neither. But you'll be wanting to go up to Myra. She's ready for you, I'll be bound." And Mrs. Cray stands on one side to let Irene mount the rickety narrow staircase that leads to the second story, and up which her feet had passed many times during the last few weeks. She traverses it now, silently and solemnly, as though a silent unseen Presence trod every step with her: it is so strange to the young to think the young lie dying!

Myra is laid on a small bed close by the open lattice and in the full light of the setting sun. Her face has lost the deathlike ghastliness it wore in the morning: it is flushed now, and her eyes are bright and staring; to Irene's inexperience she looks better; but there is a fearful anxiety pictured on her countenance that was not there before.

"Is it true?" she says in a hoarse whisper, as her visitor appears.

"What, Myra?" Irene answers, to gain time; but she knows what the girl must mean, for the door of her bedroom at the top of the little staircase stood wide open.

"What aunt said just now, that I am marked for death within the week. A week! Oh, it's a horribly short time!" And she begins to cry, weakly, but with short gasps for breath that are very distressing to behold. Irene forgets the difference of station between them: she forgets everything excepting that here is a weak, suffering spirit trembling before the Great Inevitable! And she does just what she would have done had Myra been a sister of her own—she throws her hat and mantle on a chair, and kneels down and takes the poor dying creature in her arms and presses her lips upon her forehead.

"Dear Myra, don't cry—don't be frightened. Remember who is waiting on the other side to welcome you!"

The sweet sympathetic tones, the pressure—above all the kiss, rouse Myra from the contemplation of herself.

"Did—did—you do that?"

"Do what, dear?—kiss you?"

"Yes. Did I fancy it—or were your lips here?" touching her forehead.

"My lips were there—why not? I kissed you, that you might know how truly I sympathise with your present trouble."

"You mustn't do it again. Ah! you don't guess. You would not do it if you knew—My God! my God! and I am going!" and here Myra relapses into her former grief.

For a moment Irene is silent. She is as pure a woman as this world has ever seen; but she is not ignorant that impurity exists, and like all honorable and high-minded creatures, is disposed to deal leniently with the fallen. She has suspected more than once during her intercourse with Myra, that the girl carries some unhappy secret about with her, and can well imagine how, in the prospect of death, the burden may become too heavy to be borne alone. So she considers for a little before she answers, and then she takes the white, wasted hand in hers.

"Myra! I am sure you are not happy; I am sure you have had some great trouble in your life which you have shared with no one; and now that you are so ill, the weight of it oppresses you. I don't want to force your confidence, but if it would comfort you to speak to a friend, remember that I am one. I will hear your secret (if you have a secret), and I will keep it (if you wish me to keep it) until my own life's end. Only, do now what will make you happier and more comfortable."

"Oh! I can't—I can't—I daren't."

"I daresay it will be hard to tell; but Myra, poor girl! you are soon going where no secrets can be hid, and I may be able to comfort you a little before you go."

"If you knew all, you wouldn't speak to me, nor look at me again."

"Try me."

"I daren't risk it. You're the only comfort that has come to me in this place, and yet—and yet," she says, panting, as she raises herself on one elbow and stares hungrily into Irene's compassionate face—"how I wish I dared to tell you everything!"

At this juncture, the sound of "thwacking" is audible from below, and immediately followed

by the raising of Tommy's infantine voice in discordant cries.

"She's at it again!" exclaims Myra suddenly and fiercely, as the din breaks on their conversation; and then, as though conscious of her impotency to interfere, she falls back on her pillows with a little feeble wail of despair. Irene flies downstairs to the rescue—more for the sake of the sick girl than the child—and finds Tommy howling loudly in a corner of the kitchen, whilst Mrs. Cray is just replacing a thick stick, which she keeps for the education of her family, on the chimney-piece.

"Has Tommy been naughty?" demands Irene, deferentially—for it is not always safe to interfere with Mrs. Cray's discipline.

"Lor! yes, mum, he always be. The most troublesome child as ever was—up everywhere and over everything, directly my back's turned. And here he's bin upsetting the dripping all over the place, and taking my clean apron to wipe up his muck. I'm sure hundreds would never pay me for the mischief that boy does in as many days. And he not three till Janniverry!"

"Let me have him. I'll keep him quiet for you, upstairs," says Irene; and carries off the whimpering Tommy before the laundress has time to remonstrate.

"He's not much the worse, Myra," she says cheerfully, as she resumes her seat by the bedside with the child upon her knee. "I daresay he does try your aunt's temper; but give him one of your grapes, and he'll forget all about it."

But, instead of doing as Irene proposes, Myra starts up suddenly, and, seizing the boy in her arms, strains him closely to her heart, and rocks backwards and forwards, crying over him.

"Oh, my darling! my darling—my poor darling! how I wish I could take you with me!"

Tommy, frightened at Myra's distress, joins his tears with hers; while Irene sits by, silently astonished. But a light has broken in upon her—she understands it all now.

"Myra!" she says, after a while, "so, this is the secret that you would not tell me? My poor girl, there is no need for you to speak."

"I couldn't help it!" bursts forth from Myra.

"No—not if you never looked at me again. I've borne it in silence for years, but it's been like a knife working in my heart the while. And he's got no one but me in the wide world—and now I must leave him. Oh! my heart will break!"

The child has struggled out of his mother's embrace again by this time (children, as a rule, do not take kindly to the exhibition of any violent emotion), and stands, with his curly head lowered, as though he were the offending party while his dirty little knuckles are crammed into his wet eyes.

Irene takes a bunch of grapes from her own offering of the morning, and holds them towards him.

"Tommy, go and eat these in the corner," she says, with a smile.

The tear-stained face is raised to hers—the blue eyes sparkle, the chubby fingers are outstretched. Tommy is himself again, and Irene's attention is once more directed to his mother.

"Dear Myra!" she says, consolingly.

"Don't touch me!" cries the other, shrinking from her. "Don't speak to me—I ain't fit you should do either! But I couldn't have deceived you if it hadn't been for aunt. You're so good, I didn't like that you should show me kindness under false pretences; but when I spoke of telling you, and letting you go your own way, aunt was so violent—she said, the child should suffer for every word I said. And so, for his sake, I've let it go on till now. But 'twill be soon over."

Irene is silent, and Myra takes her silence for displeasure.

"Don't think harshly of me!" she continues in a low tone of deprecation. "I know I'm unworthy; but if I could tell what your kindness has been to me—like the cold water to a thirsty soul—you wouldn't blame me so much, perhaps, for the dread of losing it. And aunt frightened me. She's beat that poor child—with a gasping sob—"till he's been black and blue; and I knew, when I was gone he'd have no one but her to look to, and she'll beat him then—I know she will—when his poor mother's cold, and can't befriend him. But if she does!" cries Myra, with fierce energy, as she clutches Irene by the arm and looks straight through her—"if she does, I'll come back, as there's a God in heaven, and bring it home to her!"

"She never can illtreat him when you are gone, Myra!"

"She will—she will! She has a hard heart, aunt has, and a hard hand, and she hates the child—she always has. And he'll be thrown on her for bed and board, and, if she can, she'll kill him!"

The thought is too terrible for contemplation. Myra is roused from the partial stupor that succeeds her violence by the feel of Irene's soft lips again upon her forehead.

"You did it again!" she exclaims, with simple wonder. "You know all—and yet, you did it again. Oh! God bless you!" and falls herself to kissing and weeping over Irene's hand.

"If you mean that I know this child belongs to you, Myra, you are right: I suspected it long ago; but further than this I know nothing. My poor girl, if you can bring yourself to confide in me, perhaps I may be able to befriend this little one when you are gone."

"Would you—really?"

"To the utmost of my power."

"Then I will tell you everything—everything! But let me drink first."

Irene holds a glass of water to her lips, which

she drains feverishly. A clumping foot comes up the staircase, and Jenny's dishevelled head is thrust sleepily into the doorway.

"Mother says it's hard upon seven, and Tommy must go to bed."

"Nearly seven!" cries Irene, consulting her watch. "So it is; and we dine at seven. I had no idea it was so late!"

"Oh! don't leave me!" whispers Myra, turning imploring eyes upon her face.

Irene stands irresolute; she fears that Colonel Mordaunt will be vexed at her absence from the dinner-table, but she cannot permit anything to come between her and a dying fellow-creature's peace of mind. So in another moment she has scribbled a few lines on a leaf torn from her pocket-book, and despatched them to the Court. Tommy is removed by main force to his own apartment, and Myra and she are comparatively alone.

"No one can hear us now," says Irene, as she closes the door and supports the dying woman on her breast.

"It's three years ago last Christmas," commences Myra feebly, "that I took a situation at Oxford. Uncle was alive then, and he thought a deal of me, and took ever so much trouble to get me the situation. I was at an hotel—I wasn't a barmaid: I used to keep the books and an account of all the wine that was given out; but I was often in and out of the bar; and I saw a good many young gentlemen that way—mostly from the colleges, or their friends."

Here she pauses, and faintly flushes.

"Don't be afraid to tell me," comes the gentle voice above her; "I have not been tempted in the same way, Myra; if I had, perhaps I should have fallen too!"

"It wasn't quite so bad as that," interposes the sick girl eagerly, "at least I didn't think so. It's no use my telling you what he was like, nor how we came to know each other; but after a while he began to speak to me and hang about me, and then I knew that he was all the world to me—that I didn't care for anything in it nor out of it, except he was there. You know, don't you, what I mean?"

"Yes; I know!"

"He was handsome and clever and had plenty of money; but it would have been all the same to me if he had been poor, and mean, and ugly. I loved him! Oh, God, how I loved him! If it hadn't been for that, worlds wouldn't have made me do as I did do. For I thought more of him all through than I did of being made a lady."

"But he could not have made you that, even in name, without marrying you, Myra."

"But he did—at least—oh! it's a bitter story from beginning to end; why did I ever try to repeat it?"

"It is very bitter, but it is very common, Myra. I am feeling for you with every word you utter."

"He persuaded me to leave the hotel with him. I thought at the time that he meant to act fairly by me, but I've come to believe that he deceived me from the very first. Yet he did love me; oh, I am sure he loved me almost as much as I loved him, until he wearied of me, and told me so."

"You found it out, you mean. He could not be so cruel as to tell you."

"Oh, yes, he did. Do you think I would have left him else? He told me that he should go abroad and leave me; that he was bitterly ashamed of himself; that it would be better if we were both dead, and that if he could, he would wipe out the remembrance of me with his blood. All that, and a great deal more; and I have never forgotten it, and I never shall forget it. I believe his words will haunt me wherever I may go—even into the other world!"

She has become so excited, and her excitement is followed by so much exhaustion, that Irene is alarmed, and begs her to delay telling the remainder of her story until she shall be more composed.

"No! no! I must finish it now; I shall not be quiet until I have told you all. When he said that, my blood got up, and I left him. My cousin Joel had been hanging about the place after me, and I left straight off and came back home with him."

"Without saying a word to—the person you have been speaking of?"

"He wanted to get red of me; why should I say a word to him? But I grieved afterwards—I grieved terribly; and when the child was born, I would have given the world to find him again."

"Did you ever try?"

"Try! I've travelled miles and miles, and walked myself off my feet to find him. I've been to Oxford and Fetterley (that was the village we lived at), and all over London, and I can hear nothing. I've taken situations in both those towns, and used his name right and left and got no news of him. There are plenty that bear the same name, I don't doubt, but I've never come upon any trace of him under it; and I've good reason to believe that it was not his right one."

"What is the name you knew him by, then, Myra?"

"Hamilton."

"Hamilton!" repeats Irene. "That is not a common name!"

"But it's not his. I've found that out since, for I know he belonged to the college, and there wasn't a gentleman with that name there all through the term. His love was false, and his name was false, and everything that took place between us was false. He deceived me from first to last, and I'm dying before I can bring him to book for it!"

"You shouldn't think of that now, Myra. You should try to forgive him, as you hope that your own sins will be forgiven."

"I could have forgiven him if it hadn't been for Tommy. But to think of that poor child left worse than alone in this wretched world—his mother dead and his father not owning him—is enough to turn me bitter, if I hadn't been so before. Aunt will ill-use him; she's barely decent to him now, when I pay for his keep, and what she'll do when he's thrown upon her for everything, I daren't think—and I shall never lie quiet in my grave!"

"Myra, don't let that thought distress you. I will look after Tommy when you are gone."

"I know you're very good. You'll be down here every now and then with a plaything or a copper for him—but that won't prevent her beating him between whiles. He's a high-spirited child, but she's nearly taken his spirit out of him already, and he's dreadfully frightened of her, poor lamb! He'll cry himself to sleep every night when I'm in the churchyard!" and the tears steal meekly from beneath Myra's half-closed eyelids, and roll slowly down her hollow cheeks.

"He shall not, Myra," says Irene, energetically. "Give the child into my charge, and I'll take him away from the cottage and see that he is properly provided for."

"You will take him up to the Court and keep him like your own child! He is the son of a gentleman!" says poor Myra, with a faint spark of pride. Irene hesitates. Has she been promising more than she will be able to perform? Yet she knows Colonel Mordaunt's easy nature, and can almost answer for his compliance with any of her wishes.

"Oh, if you could!" exclaims the dying mother, with clasped hands. "If I thought that my poor darling would live with you, I could die this moment and be thankful!"

"He shall live with me, or under my care," cries Irene. "I promise you."

"Will you swear it. Oh! forgive me! I am dying."

"I swear it."

"Oh! thank God, who put it in your heart to say so! Thank God! Thank God!"

She lies back on her pillow, exhausted by her own emotion, whilst her hands are feebly clasped above those of her benefactress, and her pale lips keep murmuring at intervals, "Thank God."

"If you please, mum, the Colonel's sent the pony chaise to fetch you home, and he hopes as you'll go immediate."

"The carriage!" says Irene, starting, "then I must go."

"Oh! I had something more to tell you," exclaims Myra; "I was only waiting for the strength. You ought to know all; I—I—"

"I cannot wait to hear it now, dear Myra. I am afraid my husband will be angry; but I will come again to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning I may not be here."

"No! no! don't think it. We shall meet again. Meanwhile, be comforted. Remember, I have promised; and with a farewell pressure to the sick girl's hand, Irene resumes her walking things, and drives back to the Court as quickly as her ponies will carry her. Her husband is waiting to receive her on the doorstep.

Colonel Mordaunt is not in the best of tempers, at least for him. The little episode which took place between Irene and himself relative to her predilection for Mrs. Cray's nurse-child, has made him rather sensitive on the subject of everything connected with the laundress's cottage, and he is vexed to-night that she should have neglected her guests and her dinner-table, to attend the deathbed of what, in his vexation, he calls a "consumptive pauper."

And so, when he put out his hand to help his wife down from her pony chaise, he is most decidedly in that condition domestically known as "grumpy."

"Take them round to the stable at once," he says sharply, looking at the ponies and addressing the groom; "why, they've scarcely a hair unturned; they must have been driven home at a most unusual rate."

"You sent word you wanted me at once, so I thought it was for something particular," interposes Irene, standing beside him in the porch.

"Do you hear what I say to you?" he repeats to the servant, and not noticing her. "What are you standing dawdling there for?" The groom touches his hat, and drives away.

"What is the matter, Philip?"

"There's nothing the matter, that I know of."

"Why did you send the pony chaise for me, then? Why didn't you come and fetch me yourself? I would much rather have walked home through the fields with you."

"We cannot both neglect our guests, Irene. If you desert them, it becomes my duty to try and supply your place."

"Why! Aunt Cavendish is not affronted, is she? She must know that it's only once in a way. Did you get my note, Philip?"

"I received a dirty piece of paper with a notice that you would not be back to dinner."

"I thought it would be sufficient," says Irene, sighing softly; "and I really couldn't leave poor Myra, Philip. She is dying as fast as it is possible, and she had something very particular to tell me. You are not angry with me?"

"Angry! oh, dear no; why should I be angry? Only, I think it would be advisable, another time, if these paupers' confidences were

got over in the morning. And I certainly do not approve of your being at the beck and call of every sick person in the village, whether you are fit to attend to them or no! You had a bad headache yourself when I left you this afternoon."

"Oh, my poor head! I had forgotten all about it. Yes; it was very painful at one time, but I suppose my excitement has driven the pain away. Philip, I have been listening to such a sad story. You know the child—the little boy that they said was at nurse with Mrs. Cray."

"I have heard you mention it. I really did not know if 'twas a boy or a girl, or if you knew yourself," he replies indifferently.

"No, no; of course not!" she says, coloring, "but you know what I mean. Well, what do you think—it's a secret though, mind"—lowering her voice—"he belongs to poor Myra, after all; isn't it shocking?"

"And what is the use of their telling you such tales as that?" replies Colonel Mordaunt, angrily; "I won't have them defiling your ears with things that are not fit for you to hear. If it is the case, why can't they keep the disgrace to themselves? You can do no good by knowing the truth."

"Oh, Philip! but you don't understand; it was the poor girl told me, and it was such a comfort to her—she has no one else to confide in. And besides, she is so unhappy, because Mrs. Cray, beats her poor little boy, and she is afraid he will be ill-treated when she is gone."

"And wants to extract a promise from you to go down there every morning and see that her precious offspring has slept and eaten well since the day before. No, thank you, Irene! I think we've had quite enough of this sort of thing for the present, and when the laundress's niece is dead, I hope that you will confine your charity more to home, and not carry it on *ad infinitum* to the third and fourth generation."

He makes one step downwards as though to leave her then, but she plucks him timidly by the sleeve and detains him.

"But, Philip—I promised her!"

"Promised what?"

"That I would befriend her child when she is gone; that I would take him away from Mrs. Cray (she was so miserable about him, poor girl, she said she couldn't die in peace), and—(I do so hope you won't be vexed)—and bring him up under my own care."

"What!" cries Colonel Mordaunt roughly, startled out of all politeness.

"I promised her I would adopt him; surely, it is nothing so very much out of the way."

"Adopt a beggar's brat out of the village—a child not born in wedlock—a boy, of all things in the world! Irene, you must be out of your senses!"

"But it is done every day."

"It may be done occasionally by people who have an interest in Ragged Schools, or the Emigration Society, or the Shoe Black Brigade, or who have arrived at the meridian of life without any nearer ties of their own; but for a young lady, just married, and with her hands full of occupation, both for the present and the future, it will be absurd—unheard of—impossible!"

"But what occupation have I that need prevent my looking after a little child, Philip? If—if—"

"If what?"

"I don't know why I should be so silly as not to like to mention it," she goes on hurriedly, though with an effort; "but supposing I—I had a child of my own; that would not interfere with my duties as mistress here, would it?"

"And would you like to have a child of your own, darling?" he answers sweetly, but irrelevantly, and relapsing into all his usual tenderness. Were Irene politic, she might win him over at this moment to grant her anything. A smile, an answering look, a pressure of the hand, would do it, and bring him to her feet a slave! But, in one sense of the word, she is not politic; her nature is too open. She cannot bring her heart to stoop to a deception, however plausible, for her own advantage. And so she answers her husband's question frankly.

"No! not at all, Philip. I've told you that a dozen times already! but I want to take this poor little boy away from Mrs. Cray, and bring him up respectfully in mind and body."

Colonel Mordaunt's momentary softness vanishes, and his "grumpiness" returns in full force.

"Then I object altogether. I'm not so fond of brats at any time as to care to have those of other people sprawling over my house—and a pauper's brat of all things. You must dismiss the idea at once."

"But I have promised, Philip."

"You promised more than you can perform."

"But I swore it. Oh, Philip! you will not make me go back from an oath made to the dying! I shall hate myself for ever if you do."

"You had no right to take such an oath without consulting me."

"Perhaps not; I acknowledge it; but it is done, and I cannot recede from my given word."

"I refuse to endorse it. I will have no bastard brought up at my expense."

The coarseness of the retort provokes her; she colors crimson, and recoils from him.

"How cruel! how pitiless of you to use that term! You have no charity! Some day you may need it for yourself!"

At that he turns upon her, crimson too, and panting.

"What makes you say so? What have you heard?"

"More than I ever thought to hear from your lips. Oh, Philip, I did not think you could be so unkind to me!" and she turns from him weeping, and goes up to her own room, leaving him conscience-stricken in the porch. It is their first quarrel; the first time angry words have ever passed between them, and he is afraid to follow her, lest he should meet with a rebuff, so he remains there, moody and miserable, and before half an hour has elapsed, could bite out his tongue for every word it uttered.

The idea of the adopted child is as unpalatable to him as ever; it appears a most hare-brained and absurd idea to him; but he cannot bear to think that he should have been cross with Irene, or that she should have been betrayed into using hasty words to him.

Oh, that first quarrel! how infinitely wretched it makes humanity, and what a shock it is to hear hot and angry words pouring from the lips that have never open yet for us except in blessing.

Better thus, though—better, hot and angry words, than cold and calm.

The direst death for love to die is when it is reasoned into silence by the voice of indifference and good sense.

Othello's passion was rough and deadly, but while it lasted it must have been very sweet pain. Was it not kinder to smother Desdemona whilst it was at white heat than to let her live to see the iron cool?

But Colonel Mordaunt is in no mood for reasoning; he is simply miserable; and his mood ends—as all such moods do end for true lovers—by his creeping up to Irene's side in the twilight, and humbly begging her forgiveness, which she grants him readily—crying a little over her own short-comings the while—and then they make it up, and kiss, as husband and wife should do, and come downstairs together, and are very cheerful for the remainder of the evening, and never once mention the obnoxious subject that disturbed their peace.

(To be continued.)

ILL THINK OF THEE, LOVE.

I'll think of thee, love, when the landscape is still,
And the soft mist is floating from valley and hill;
When the mild, rosy beam of the morning I see,

I'll think of thee, dearest, and only of thee.

I'll think of thee, love, when the first sound of day
Scares the bright-plumaged bird from its covert away—
For the world's busy voice has no music for me—

I'll think of thee, dearest, and only of thee.

I'll think of thee, love, when the dark shadows sleep
On the billows that roll o'er the emerald deep,
Like the swift speeding gale, every thought then will be—

I'll think of thee, dearest, and only of thee.

I'll think of thee, dearest, while thou art afar,
And I'll liken thy smile to the night's fairest star;
As the ocean shell breathes of its home in the sea,
So in absence my spirit will murmur of thee.

PATIENT GRISSEL.

Griselidis was married to one of the most illustrious and most celebrated descendants of the house of Saluce, who was named Gualtiero. Without wife or child, and showing no disposition to have either spouse or heir, he exercised himself in hunting, but this mode of living and thinking was objected to by his subjects, who supplicated him so often and so determinedly to give them an heir, that he resolved to cede to their prayers. Whereupon they promised him to choose a woman who, by birth and virtue, was worthy of him.

[Here we have the first intimation of the Eastern origin of the story—the choice of a wife by intermediaries.]

But Gualtiero answered them, "My friends you desire to force me to do a thing that I had resolved never to do, because I know how difficult it is to find a wife possessing all the qualities I require, and which alone can ensure decent behavior between husband and wife. This decent behavior is so rare, that it never, or only very rarely, can be found. How wretched must be the life of a man obliged to live with a person whose character has nothing in common with his! You believe you are able to judge of daughters through their fathers and mothers, and following this principle, you wish to choose a wife for me. Error—for what can you know of the secret habits of the father, or, above all, of the mother? Again, even if you were acquainted with those matters, do we not generally remark that daughters degenerate? But since, in fine, you will absolutely have it that I am to chain myself with the laws of marriage, I have consented; yet, so that I may find fault only with myself if I have cause to repent, I will it that I myself shall choose my wife, and that whoever she may be,

you shall honor her as your lady and mistress,—or I will make you repent having prayed me to marry when my tastes strayed from matrimony."

The good people replied that he might count upon them—provided that he would marry.

Now for some time the Marquis had been attracted by the behavior and beauty of a young girl who lived in the village below the castle. He fancied that she would be just suitable, and without thinking more, he decided to marry her.

He called the father before him, and told him his plan; and then summoned his council and his subject neighbors living near the castle.

"My friends," said he, "it has pleased you, and it pleases you still, that I determine to take a wife. I have decided to give you this contentment; but forget not the promise you have made me to honor, as your liege lady, the woman upon whom I fix, no matter whom. I have found a damsel near at hand who pleases me, and she is the wife I have chosen. In a few days I shall bring her home, so prepare to receive her honorably, that I may be as satisfied with you as you will be with me."

Here the assembly showed great joy, and all there said, with one voice, that they would honor the new Marchioness as their liege lady and mistress.

From that moment the lord and his subjects thought only of the preparations for the wedding, the Marquis inviting many of his friends and relations and some gentlemen of the neighborhood. He had made a number of rich robes, cut to fit a damsel whose height and size were those of the bride, and looked after the rings, girdle, and crown—in fact, after every requirement necessary to a young bride.

The day decided upon, the Marquis, at about nine in the morning, attended by his court, mounted his horse, saying, "Gentles, it is time to go find the bride."

Off they set, and soon arrived in the village where she resided. As they came near the house where she lived with her father, they saw her returning from the well, and running forward that she might catch a glimpse of the lord's bride.

When the Marquis saw her, he called her by name, Griselidis, and asked her where was her father.

"My lord," replied she, blushing, "he is within."

Thereupon the Marquis dismounted, entered the poor cottage, and finding the father, who was called Gianetto,—"I am come," said he, "to marry thy daughter Griselidis; but I will, in the first place, that she answers before thee certain questions I shall ask her."

Then he asked the damsel if, when she should be his wife, she would force herself to please him; if she would know how to keep cool, whatever was done or said; if she would always be obedient and docile.

A "Yes" was the answer to all these requests. The Marquis then took her by the hand, led her out, and, before everybody, clothed her in the superb garments he had brought with him, and finally placed a crown upon her spreading hair.

"Gentles," said he to the surprised spectators, "behold her whom I will to take for wife, if she wills that I shall be her husband." Then turning to her he added, "Griselidis, wilt thou have me for thy husband?"

"Yes, my lord, since it is your will," she replied.

Thereupon he married her, and led her in great pomp to his castle, where the wedding feast was as magnificent as though he had espoused a daughter of the King of France.

The young wife seemed to change her habits with her fortune. She was, as it has been said, beautiful and well-grown, but after her marriage she became so amiable and gracious that she appeared rather the daughter of some lord than of humble Gianetto. She amazed everyone who had known her as a peasant-girl. Moreover, she was so obedient to her husband, and took such care to anticipate his least wishes that he was the most contented and the happiest of mortals. She had so cleverly managed to conciliate the affections of her husband's subjects, that there was not one but loved her as much as he did, and but prayed heaven for her happiness and prosperity. All agreed that if appearances had been against the Marquis, the facts were in his favor; that he had acted like a wise and prudent man; and that he must have been wonderfully sagacious to discover so much merit under the rags of a peasant girl.

The rumors of Griselidis' good qualities spread in a very short time, not only over that land, but far beyond, and so powerful was her empire, that she effaced the disagreeable impressions that her husband's faults had created amongst his subjects.

In proper time she gave birth to a daughter, to the great joy of the Marquis, but owing to a madness such as one cannot conceive of, he took it into his head, by the harshest and cruelest means to try the patience of his wife. To this end, he began with harsh language, saying that her low birth had set all his subjects against him, and that the daughter she had brought into the world would not a little help to make him bad friends with his people—more especially as they wanted an heir to his lands.

Upon hearing these reproaches, without changing face or feature, Griselidis said to him, "Do with me all that you think your honor and your peace of mind command, and I shall not complain, knowing that I am worth much less than the meanest of your subjects; and that in no way have I merited the noble destiny to which you have raised me!"

This reply pleased the lord, who saw that the honors he and his subjects paid his wife had not made her proud.

Having thus spoken to her of the hatred he said his subjects felt towards the child, some time after he sent a servant whom he had prepared to his wife, to whom he said, with a desolate air, "My lady, if I would save my life, I must obey my lord's orders. I am compelled to take away your child."

So saying, he held his peace. Now upon hearing these words, and marking the man's wretched countenance, and above all remembering her lord's words, she felt that he had condemned their child to death. Nevertheless, though in her heart she was suffering the most cruel agony, she showed no sign, but took the child out of its cradle, kissed, blessed, and placed it in the servant's arms.

"Do," she said, "as the master has commanded thee. I but ask one pitying favor: do not cast my innocent to the wild beasts of the land, or to the wild birds of prey."

The servant, carrying the child, returned and told all to the Marquis, who was much pleased with the courage and constancy of his wife; and who thereupon sent his daughter to one of his relations at Bologna, directing that the child should be reared like a gentlewoman, but without knowing who she was.

[It is very clear, in this Eastern and impossible fiction, that the daughter is reared in ignorance of her name and station, that when grown up she may not prevent the last trial of patience to which the mother is submitted. Again, the nomadic, Eastern character of the tale is shown in the sending of the servant. In Syria, the schek, wandering from place to place, would naturally send a trusted messenger to the wife. But in the tale under consideration it is to be presumed that husband and wife are living under the same roof—not in different tents—and therefore the use of the messenger has no basis.]

Again Griselidis gave birth to a child—this time a boy. The joy of the Marquis was now at its height, but the trials to which he had subjected his wife did not sufficiently assure him that she was obedient, and therefore again he used harsh language, harsher even than the first, and in an angry voice he said to her at last, "Since thy son was born, it is beyond me to live at peace with my subjects. They are humiliated at the thought that the grandson of a peasant will one day be my successor and master. If I do not will that their anger shall go farther, and that they drive me from the heritage of my fathers, it must be with thy son as it was with thy daughter; and, in fine, that I divorce myself from thee, and take a wife worthy of the rank to which I have raised thee."

The Princess heard him out with admirable patience, and made only this reply:—

"My lord, be at peace; do as you shall think fit; think not of me. Nothing in this world is so dear to me as that which pleases thee."

Soon after, the Marquis sent away his son to Bologna, to be reared with his sister, and let it be supposed that he killed the boy. Meanwhile Griselidis, though very tender-hearted, showed as much patience in this trial as in the former. The Prince was utterly amazed, for he had persuaded himself that no woman in the world could bear patiently so great a trial, and he would have believed that her behavior was the result of indifference had he not known how much she loved children.

[It may be remarked here how thoroughly the repetition of the cruelty, which increased in force, in taking away the second child is typical of Eastern literature; as also is the idea of making the greater trial the loss of a boy, the loss of the girl being a minor misery—exactly as, to this day, in Hebrew families, only the birth of a boy has rejoicing as a result.]

Meanwhile, the Marquis's subjects, who had no knowledge that a trick was being played, supposed the children dead, and came to abhor the Marquis as thoroughly as they pitied his wife. As for this unfortunate, she consumed her grief without complaint, and though she often heard the woman about her speak openly against the Prince, she never uttered a reproach.

Yet was not this strange Prince content. He felt it necessary to put his wife's patience to a final proof. He declared openly to many of his relations that he could no longer endure Griselidis; that he felt he had made a young man's mistake when he married her; and that he intended to put her away, and marry with another. In vain a few honest men protested against the injustice of his proceeding. All the reply he made, when he thought fit to make any, went to the effect that he had made up his mind to be divorced.

The Princess, informed of the misfortune which threatened her, foreseeing that she should be obliged to return to her father's house and the work of her early days, and that her place would be taken by another near him who had all her love, was in her heart weary to death, but she was prepared to accept this new misfortune with the same outward calmness she had shown on the previous occasions.

A little while after, the Prince caused a forged papal dispensation to be brought him, as though from the Pope, and he gave his subjects to understand that by this bull he was enabled to put away Griselidis and marry another. Sending for the unhappy woman he thus tormented, and in the presence of many persons, he said, "Woman, by permission of the Holy Father, the Pope, I may take another wife, and let thee go by. And because my ancestors have been gentlemen and lords on the land where

thine have been hinds, thou canst no longer be my better-half—there is too much difference between us. I will that you go back to thy father's house, and only with such matters as thou didst bring with you. I have found one who will well replace thee, and who will suit me better in every way."

Terrible as was this sentence, Griseldis forced back her tears, a very extraordinary thing in woman, and replied thus: "My lord, I have always very well known the immense difference between your noble state and my lowliness. What I have received by your goodness I have looked upon as by Heaven's special favor, and not as that of which I was worthy. Since it pleases you to take back what you have given me, it is my duty to give it up with submission, and even with gratitude for having been thought worthy to be, if only for a time, what I have been. Here is the ring with which you married me. Take it. As to my dowry, I have no want of purse, or beast of burden to carry it away. I have not forgotten, either, that you took me as I was born; and if it seems honest to you that she who has brought you two children should go to her father's home stared at by all eyes as she passes by, so be it. But if you cherish as worth any price the purity that was mine when you bade me to follow you, grant me some clothing wherein to leave your palace?"

The Marquis was softened by these words, but determining to carry out his design, he said, with an angry look, "So be it—go forth barely covered."

All those present prayed him to give her a robe, if only that the people should not cast eyes upon so miserably clothed a woman, after she had born the title of Princess through thirteen long years. But all their prayers were useless.

This unfortunate woman, after saying good-bye, went out from the castle, clothed in ongarment, without head-dress or foot-covering, and so got home to her father. All who saw her pass in this humble and humiliating gear did honor to her in tears and compassion; while the luckless father, who had never been able to convince himself that the Marquis quite recognised Griseldis as his wife, and who had always expected that sooner or later she would be sent packing, was able at once to clothe her with the homely garments she had left behind her, and which he had kept in anticipation of her return. So Griseldis put on her old shepherdess homespun, and fell back into her ancient ways, bearing the reverses of fortune with unshaken fortitude.

The Marquis then gave his subjects to understand that he was about to marry a daughter of one of the Counts of Pagano, and he gave directions to make preparation for a magnificent wedding. It was then he ordered Griseldis before him, and said, "My new wife will come home in a few days, and I wish that she may be agreeably impressed with all about her upon her arrival. Thou knowest that there is no one about me who can look so well after a house as thou; therefore set the palace in order, invite such gentle women-folk as thou pleasest, as though thou wert still the mistress of the house. The wedding, complete, thou canst go back to thy father's hut."

Now, though every word was like a knife-thrust into the heart of this poor Griseldis, who could not contentedly set aside her love as she had her fortune, she said humbly, "My lord, what you will, I do."

Thereupon, still wearing her old clothes, she entered the palace, and set to work brushing, rubbing, sweeping, cooking after the manner of the lowest servant. Then she invited the court ladies to the wedding, and when the day was come, she received them while still wearing her village rags.

The Marquis, who, with all the care of a father, had superintended the education of his children, who had remained under the care of a branch of the house of Pagano, to whom the Marquis was related by marriage, now sent for his two children.

The girl was about thirteen, and never had beauty more perfect than hers been seen, while the boy numbered six years. Now, the gentleman who brought the children had been instructed to say that he accompanied the new bride to her husband, at the same time being warned to remain absolutely silent as to the truth.

All being done as the Marquis had ordered, the gentleman, the maid, and the youth arrived about dinner-time, accompanied by a numerous retinue, and passed through the crowds of people all eager to see the new bride.

The ladies of the court received the supposed bride, while Griseldis stood behind, still in her country clothes, and waited for her turn to salute the damsel, which she did, saying "Welcome."

The ladies of the court, who had earnestly prayed the Marquis, but vainly, either that the unhappy woman should be allowed to retire, or else appear in suitable clothing, now sat down to table, and the dinner was served.

Need it be said that all eyes watched the supposed bride, while all admitted that the Marquis had certainly not lost by exchange. Above all, Griseldis admired the new-comer, and had enough to do in dividing her attention between the bride and the bride's brother.

The Marquis, believing at last that he had sufficiently tried his wife, and seeing that the tests to which he subjected her could not cause her even to change countenance, and at the same time knowing that her behavior was not the result of indifference, thought it was time to relieve the poor woman from the agony she

was doubtless suffering, much as she affected calmness.

Therefore, making her face all the company, he said, "What think you of the new bride?"

"My lord," she said, "I can but think well of her, and no doubt she is as wise as she is beautiful; indeed, I am sure you will live together the happiest in the world. But I ask one favor on your part; it is this—not to heap upon her such sharp words as you have been prodigal of with me, for methinks she could not bear them so well, seeing that she has been reared delicately, while your first wife had suffered pains and penalties from her cradle."

The Marquis, seeing Griseldis firmly persuaded of the fact of his second marriage, now sat her down by his side.

"Griseldis," said he to her, "'tis time thou didst gather the fruit of thy long patience, and that those who have looked upon me as a heartless, brutal, and cruel man may know that all I have done was but a premeditated pretence, to teach them how to choose a good wife, and thee how to be one, in order that I might have a quiet life whilst I must live with thee. 'Twas above all, a scolding wife I feared in marrying. I first tried thee with harsh words, and thou didst reply but with patience. Never word in answer saidst thou; never once didst thou complain; so am I certain to obtain in thee the happiness I wanted. I am about to give thee back in one hour all that I have taken from thee through many years, and to pay thee with tender love for my ill-treatment. Look, then, with joy upon this damsel that thou didst take to be my second wife, as thy daughter and mine, and her brother as truly our son. They are those whom thou and many others have looked upon as the victims of my barbarity. I am thy husband, and I love to tell thee this many times; for no husband can be so blessed in a wife as I am in thee."

Thereupon he embraced her tenderly, and kissed away the tears of joy fallen from her eyes. Then they stood up together, and went and embraced their children, while all those present were agreeably surprised at this change in affairs.

The ladies, rising hurriedly from table, led Griseldis into a private room, where they pulled off her rags, and dressed her like a grand lady; and as such she appeared in the great hall, for she had lost nothing of her dignity and splendor under her rags.

Now to celebrate this new marriage the galas were continued many days.

It was therefore seen that the Marquis had acted wisely, but it was admitted that he had used harsh and violent measures to obtain his ends; while, on the other hand, everybody praised beyond measure the virtue and courage shown by Griseldis.

The Marquis, at the summit of happiness, removed Gianetto, the father of the Marchioness, from his low condition, and gave him enough upon which to end his day honorably; and after having well married his daughter, lived a long time happy with Griseldis, he well knowing how to make her forget the miseries of the past by the charm of the present.

And so ends one of the least natural and most intolerable tales that ever became popular.

The husband and wife are equally impossible and contemptible. The woman who can be patient under the infliction of cruel injustice is almost an accomplice of the actual offender. Here we have a woman who actually raises no protest against the murder of her two children, and whose idea of life is the theory of slavish obedience. The injuries of thirteen years never once call for protest on her part, and finally she pleads for mercy upon her successor, because she is better born than herself.

A student of Eastern literature is much amused, as he reads this tale, to mark how gallant Boccaccio tries to tone down the abject atrocities of the tale as he gets it—whence he does not say. The tale is evidently an Eastern satire, sung probably, in the first place, in comparatively modern times by wandering Arab improvisators. The commingled fun and cruelty evidently point out an Eastern, or rather East Mediterranean origin. How thoroughly nomadic is the Marquis's going to fetch the bride, his meeting her at the well, her expression of slavish obedience, the leaving of the bride's father still in his lowly position. Throughout, the wife is an absolute slave rather than a spouse; the Marquis a thorough despot; his subjects abject adherents. The scheme of infanticide, it need only be said, is thoroughly Asiatic; and while the ousting of Griseldis by means of a papal dispensation is quite childish, seeing that all men should know there was no basis upon which to obtain divorce; on the other hand, how suggestive of the tale of Hagar is the thrusting out one wife for another, and compelling the first to wait upon the second. There are many other minor points indicating the Asiatic origin of this tale, (an Arabian joke, perhaps, told seriously in Europe), and, notably, Griseldis' acts when giving up her first child. She obeys, but blesses the infant, and makes but this one request—that the messenger shall neither throw the child to the beasts of the field, or wild birds of the air. Any one acquainted with certain obligations will recall how such punishments are threatened in case of disobedience; while it is patent to any capacity, that while there are no wild birds or beasts in Italy, wild animals and vultures prevail in the deserts and other places associated with nomadic, half-civilised tribes. There are several tales which appear to have some association with this of Griseldis, and where a spirit of jocularity and cruelty are combined in the treatment of persons closely allied to the

sufferer. The tale of Lady Godiva at once rises to the memory. Here, again, the humiliation of nudity (a social crime in the East, as all Biblical students must know) is put in operation. But it is interesting to remark how in the Godiva tale this act is associated with a practical, Christian sentiment of sacrifice. On the other hand, as instancing the Eastern origin of this tale, the punishment that falls upon Peeping Tom is equally Asiatic in character.

The "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" teem with parallels to this tale of Griseldis, but in no one more especially than that of Bedreddin Hassan, when, being discovered by his mother through the pepper in the cream tarts he sells as a pastry-cook, he is seized, and instead of at once being restored to his family, is carried as prisoner in a cage until he is brought home. The idea appears to be that joy is heightened by past suffering sufficiently to compensate that suffering. So in the tale of Joseph the brothers are thrown into prison, that they may find greater joy in the presents they receive; while little Benjamin is made to suffer dread of death, as a supposed thief of a silver cup, in order that his joy may be the greater when Joseph discovers himself. Several tales possessed of a similar philosophy are to be found in the Koran.

The moral of a perusal of the tale of Patient Griseldis appears to be that our days are so far from those when, even in a wandering song, the lesson of women being utter slaves could be found palatable, that it is only good as a contrast. No woman could have been, or should have been, as patient as Griseldis, and the time has long since passed away when a man could even indulge in the belief, much less put it in exercise, that the fidelity of a woman should be no higher than that of a house dog.

THE CHURCH ORGAN.

They've got a bran-new organ, Sue,
For all their fuss and search,
They've done just as they said they'd do,
And fetched it into church;
They're bound the critter shall be seen,
And on the preacher's right
They've hoisted up their new machine
In every body's sight.
They've got a chorister and choir,
Ag'in my voice and vote;
For it was never my desire
To praise the Lord by note.

I've been a sister, good an' true,
For five-and-twenty year;
I've done what seemed my part to do,
And prayed my duty clear.
I've sung the hymns both slow and quick,
Just as the preacher read,
And twice, when Deacon Tubbs was sick,
I took the fork and led!
And now their bold, new-fangled ways
Is coming all about;
And I, right in my latter days,
Am fairly crowded out!

To-day, the preacher—good old dear—
With tears all in his eyes,
Read, "I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,"
I a'ways like that blessed hymn,
I s'pose I a'ways will,
It sometimes gratifies my whim
In good old Ortonville;
But when that choir got up to sing,
I could not catch a word;
They sung the most dog-godest thing
A body ever heard.

Some worldly chaps was standing near;
And when I see them grin,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And boldly waded in.
I thought I'd chase their tune along,
And tried with all my might!
But though my voice is good and strong,
I couldn't steer it right;
When they was high, then I was low,
An' also contrawise;
An' I too fast, or they too slow,
To "mansions in the skies."

And after every verse you know,
They play a little tune;
I didn't understand, and so
I started on too soon.
I pitched it pretty middlin' high.
I fetched a lusty tone,
But, oh, alas! I found that I
Was singin' there alone!
They laughed a little, I am told,
But I had done my best;
And not a wave of trouble rolled
Across my peaceful breast.

And Sister Brown—I could but look—
She sits right front of me;
She never was no singing book,
An' never went to be;
But then she a'ways tried to do
The best she could, she said;
She understood the time right through,
An' kept it with her head;
But when she tried this morning, oh,
I had to laugh or cough;
It kept her head a bobbin' so,
It e'en a'most came off.

And Deacon Tubbs—he all broke down,
As one might well suppose;
He took one look at Sister Brown,

And meekly scratched his nose.
He calmly looked his hymn book though
And laid it on the seat,
And then a pensive sigh he drew,
And looked completely beat;
He didn't slug, he didn't shout,
He didn't try to rise,
But drew his red bandanner out,
And wiped his weeping eyes.

WHICH WAS THE LOVER?

"I do wish, Gilbert, you wouldn't be so full of whims and caprices. What have I done now?"

Mr. Gilbert Armitage was the happy man whom Miss Milner had promised one day to marry. But there were a dozen times a day when he was ready to hang himself, for all that.

"It was last night at the ball," said he; not that I care for Morse Jerningham."

"Oh, Gilbert, how tiresome you are!"

"Susy, I have scarcely seen you in a week," remonstrated the young lover; "I might as well not be engaged to you."

"And I'm tired of our engagement. Mamma thinks—and so does Aunt Margaretta—that I can do better."

"Do you really wish to be released from our engagement, Susy?"

"I really do," she answered.

"Then you are free."

He turned abruptly on his heel and left her. "Let him go," she cried aloud. "Morse Jerningham is not so handsome and intelligent as Gilbert, but Morse Jerningham is rich, and I always thought I should like to be a rich man's wife."

And Susy went into the house chanting a merry little air.

"You are in spirits, Susanna," said Aunt Margaretta.

"So I am," said Susy. "I've just dismissed a lover."

"Gilbert Armitage?"

"Yes."

"I am glad to hear it," said Aunt Margaretta. "Young Armitage was very well, but he's not as rich as some of the young men here, and you are pretty enough, Susy, to do as you please."

That evening, Susy Milner came out in a superb riding-habit.

Two horses were led to the door by a groom. Gilbert Armitage, who was pacing up and down with a cigar in his mouth, stopped.

"You are not going to ride Brown Diana, Susy?"

"Yes, I am. Mr. Jerningham says she's as safe as a kitten."

"Let me persuade you to alter your resolution."

"You have no longer any right to speak thus to me, Mr. Armitage."

"I speak to you simply as I would speak to my sister, my mother, or any other lady whom I beheld rushing headlong into danger."

At that moment Morse Jerningham came out.

Gilbert drew back, but a pained look came over his face, and he saw Susy spring lightly on Brown Diana's back.

Margaretta was standing at her window.

"Something has happened," she said to herself. "I wonder what. Oh, my God! they are bringing a limp, lifeless figure up from the beach, and it is our Susy."

Brown Diana had taken fright, and thrown her rider.

Susy Milner had been picked up senseless and bruised, and now lay between life and death, a broad gash across her forehead, nearly all her teeth knocked out, and an arm broken.

If only she had followed Gilbert Armitage's advice that last time.

"Do let me have the looking-glass, aunt."

And the old dowager, not without many misgivings, gave the little hand-mirror to her niece, as she sat up among the pillows.

False hair, false teeth, a zig-zag scar across her forehead, and the pallor of a long, burning fever replacing the bloom of former days!

Susy Milner shuddered.

"Oh!" she sobbed, as the mirror dropped from her hands. "I hate myself!"

"Susy, Susy! don't talk so," broke out the quivering voice of Gilbert Armitage, who was being admitted, for the first time, by Mrs. Milner. "Only give me the right to comfort and cherish you. Only say, Susy, that you will be mine."

"Oh, Gilbert! you cannot really love a disfigured creature such as I am!"

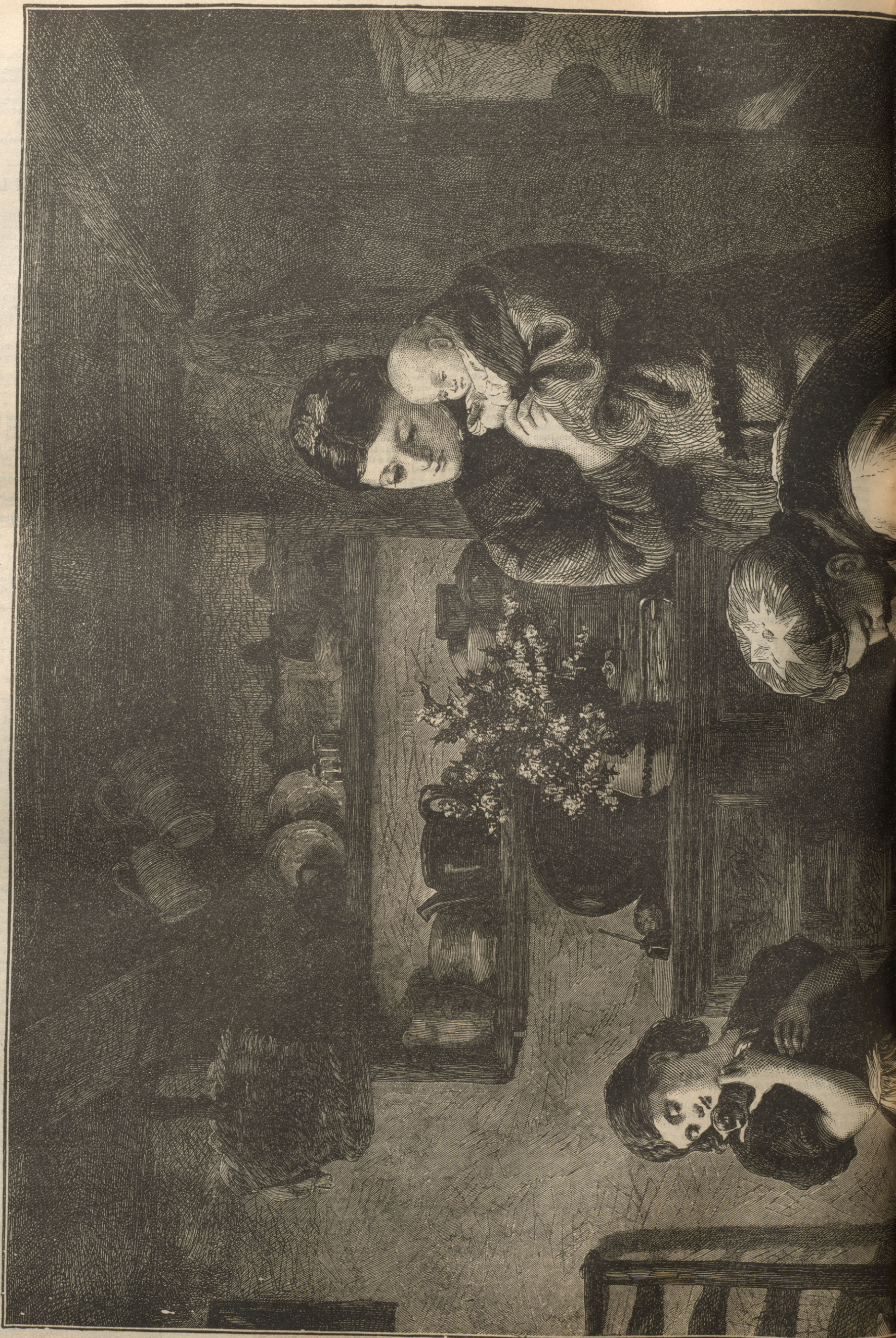
"I never loved you half so much as I do at this instant. Darling, you are my Susy still."

She was in very truth, his Susy.

And in her wifely troth, Gilbert Armitage was content.

SOMETHING LIKE A POINTER.—A gentleman has a thoroughbred pointer dog which is said to be the most efficient animal of its kind. It never lets any chance slip by it. The other day, as it was trotting along the street, its master observed that it ran up the front steps of a house, and pointed dead at the door-plate. He whistled, but the dog refused to budge an inch. Upon going up to see what the matter was, he found that the door-plate bore the name of "A Partridge."

BOOK-KEEPING may be taught in a single lesson of three words—Never lend them.



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THE FAVORITE

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1874.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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their safe keeping.

THE NOSE.

It is rather a singular fact that, although the
eyes, the mouth, the eyebrows, the eyelashes,
the lips,—in fact, all the features of the face,
have received commendation from the poets, the
nose has been left alone, without much passing
remark. Throughout all poetical literature,
there seems to have been a strict silence kept on
this important subject. No poet has ever yet
found courage to write an "ode" to the nose.
One would think it would be a very good sub-
ject, if for nothing else than for its novelty. It
certainly is not worn out, because there has
been very little, if anything, ever written about it.

Even in conversation, in every-day life, very
light mention is made of the nose. How often
we hear the expressions:—"What beautiful
eyes;" "what rosy lips;" "what plump
cheeks;"—but how seldom is the remark made,
"what a fine nose!" Whenever the nose is
spoken of, it is with a smile. No one ever
talks seriously about it; few ever think of ex-
patriating on its beauty. It is more than probable
if our greatest poet should send a poem "on the
nose" to the editor of a periodical, the latter
would respectfully decline it, with the remark:
—"That's all very good, my dear sir; but then,
you know, it is on the nose, and that won't do
at all."

The very terms we use in describing a man's
nose tend to bring it into contempt and make
us laugh. For instance, we say that a man has
a pug-nose, a hook-nose, hatchet-nose, a club-
nose, a snub-nose, a potato-nose, a peaked-nose,
a parrot's-nose, or a turned-up-nose. Some
thoughtless people designate it as a snout, a pro-
boscis; while others, in speaking of a large nose,
call it a promontory. A Frenchman says of a
clever man, that he has a fine nose; of a pru-
dent one, that he has a good nose; of a proud
man, that he carries his nose in the air; an
inquisitive person is said to poke his nose every-
where; a gourmand is described as always hav-
ing his nose in his plate; that of the scholar is
said to be always in his books. When an indi-
vidual is growing angry under provocation, the
French say the mustard is rising to his nose.
The English say of a man who does not form
very decisive opinions—who is led by what
others say rather than by his own judgment—that
he is led by the nose. Others who do them-
selves harm when trying to injure an enemy,
are said to have cut off the nose to spite the
face. And, in love affairs, when a rival has
been supplanted, it is said that he has had his
nose put out of joint.

A whole issue of our journal might be filled

with the humorous allusions which have been
made on the nose. From the very earliest
times, down to the present, it would seem as if
there were a tacit agreement among mankind
to make the nose a subject of jest. The follow-
ing is a versification of a remark made on a man,
who not only had a very large nose, but large
teeth, also:

"Let Dick one summer day expose
Before the sun his monstrous nose,
And stretch his giant mouth, to cause
Its shade to fall upon his jaws;
His nose so long, and mouth so wide,
And those twelve grinders, side by side,
Then Dick, with very little trial,
Would make an excellent sundial."

The literal translation of the remark is:
placing your nose opposite to the sun, and, open-
ing your mouth, you will show the hour to all
observers. A Greek poet describes the nose of
a man as being so large that its distance from
his ears prevented him from hearing himself
sneeze.

Although the nose has been ridiculed through
all time, and held in contempt, yet the majority
of the greatest men who have ever lived have
been noted for large noses. The Romans had a
proverb:—"It is not common to every one to
have a nose;" meaning that it was not every
one who could boast of a prominent nasal ap-
pendage, or, to speak more plainly, have an ex-
pressive nose. Cyrus the Great had a long, sharp
nose; and the Persians of the present day, in
order that they may resemble, in one particu-
lar, at least, their great warrior, pinch their
noses to resemble his. Cicero was called the
orator with the equivocal nose. Julius Caesar
had an aquiline nose; so had Achilles; but the
nose of the old philosopher, Socrates, it is sad
to relate, was a decided pug.

It is almost needless to say that the nose en-
ters very largely into the matter of personal
beauty. All writers on physiology and beauty
lay great stress on the part it must take in the
facial outline. Some call it the regulator of all
the features. One claims it should be one third
the length from the tip of the chin to the roots
of the hair; and, if there is any deviation from
this rule, it must be an excess, for it would be bet-
ter to have too large a nose than one too small.
Plato called the aquiline the royal nose; and,
from the fact that the subjects of most of the
early sculptors and painters were represented
as having large noses, we may judge that they
preferred them to small ones. But tastes differ;
for, among the Kalmucks, a dumpy nose is con-
sidered the perfection of beauty. The Hotten-
tots, among other heathenish customs, flatten
the noses of their offspring; and the Chinese
consider a nose of no account unless it be short
and thick. The Crim Tartars do worse than
this—they break the noses of their children be-
cause they consider them in the way of their
eyes.

HOBBIES.

If hobbyhorses were at once and for ever
abolished, half the commerce of every civilized
country would vanish along with them. Men
pursue other avocations with various degrees of
perseverance and pertinacity; but they ride
their "hobbies" when they once get fairly and
safely into the saddle, from one year's end to
another, until the grim tyrant bars the way,
and there is an end to the race. The reason is,
that the race they run is that of inclination, not
of necessity. Circumstances often force men to
the adoption of a profession; but it is choice
that mounts them upon their hobbies. Hence
it follows that the hobby is often so different
from the calling, and that the calling of one
man is the hobby of another, and *vice versa*.
The hobby of the analytic and philosophical
Paley was angling; he could cruelly impale an
antagonist on the horns of a dilemma, but he
preferred to feel the writhings of a gudgeon im-
paled upon his hook. He could fathom the me-
taphysical profound with the "plummet of
thought," but he preferred to gauge the depth of
the brook, where the roach lay at the bottom,
with a plummet of lead.

One man's hobby lies in books, which he
never reads. He spends his life, and all his su-
perfluous cash, in the collection of volumes of
which he never peruses more than the title
pages. His shelves are groaning beneath the
erudition of all ages and all countries. He gloats
over the possession of the rarest works, and will
travel from one end of the kingdom to the other
for the mere chance of purchasing a unique
specimen to add to his collection. It would
take him a century to spell over what he has
already amassed; but he never dreams of such
a thing—he reads the catalogue, the inventory
of his riches, and nothing else; every addition
to that is an addition to his satisfaction, because
it is an additional grace to his hobby. Another
man's hobby is pictures. His mind is profound-
ly impressed with the glories of art—the myste-
rious gloom of Rembrandt, the savageness of
Salvator, the "corregiosity of Corregio." He
dreams of old masters, and haunts the dusty
purlieus of Wardour Street and Soho, and hangs
about the auction-rooms, and nods his head at
the cost of fifty pounds a time. He is learned
in oils and varnishes, and knows "all about
megilps and that;" he rises with Raphael, of
whom an "undoubted original" hangs at the
foot of his bed; he breakfasts with Hobbima,
dines with Rubens, sups with Vandyke, and
goes to sleep with Claude Lorraine. He is never

taken in; not he,—he is too good a judge for
that. Is he?

The hobby of a third steady rider is auto-
graphs. He sees a charm in the handwriting of
remarkable persons superior to anything else
that belonged to them. His treasures are scraps
of paper, old letters, blank leaves torn from
books, or franked envelopes. The genuine "P,"
his mark," of some baron bold of the unlearn-
ed middle age, if he could get it, would be
dearer to him than a cheque on Courts and Co.
for a good round sum. He enshrines his blotted
hoards in close cabinets, under lock and key,
and dares not trust them otherwise out of sight,
lest Betty should mistake them for waste paper,
and consign them to the kitchen fire. A fourth
rides a musical hobby, and goes merrily through
the world to the sound of fiddle and flute, and
French horn and double bass. He puffs and
scrapes, and thumps away the days
of his ears upon all manner of instruments;
and his mouth is full of German and Italian
celebrities—of Mozart and Beethoven, and
Sebastian Bach and Padre Martini, and Al-
brechtsberger and Rhigini, and Cherubini, and
Cianchettini, "and all others that end in *ini*;"
and Spohr, and Graun, and Droebs, and Eybler,
and Schneider, and a hundred and fifty more,
whom to pronounce were to dislocate one's
jaws, but whom to hear were to be rapt in Ely-
sium. His whole life is one song; and when
he sinks into silence at last, it is with the
blessed hope of a joyful Da Capo in the land of
celestial harmony. A fifth gets astride upon a
volume of Philidor, and, in mute and almost
motionless enjoyment, rides double with a cher-
ished companion, whom he venerates and
esteems precisely in proportion to the trouble
he is at to beat him. His most powerful and
inexorable antagonist he is dearest friend. The
chess-board, their field of strife, is their com-
mon estate and the pledge of their union; and
for them there is no world beyond the sixty-four
squares upon which they marshal their mimic
war.

It is not always, however, that men manifest
a correct taste in the selection of their hobbies.
To the instances we have adduced above, there
is, perhaps, no very violent objection to be made,
on that score, at least. Some eccentric excep-
tions, which have come within our own obser-
vation, may be thought worth a passing notice.
A French nobleman residing in Paris some
years ago, being, perhaps, imbued with the con-
viction that "there is nothing like leather,"
chose boot for a hobby. His own boots were the
one thing in the universe to the cultivation of
which he devoted himself. Most mornings of
his life he put on a new pair, which, when his
valet drew them off, were carefully polished and
promoted to the shelves where stood the glitter-
ing ranks of their predecessors. He had built
himself a long gallery for the reception of his
leathern wares; and here they were arranged
in rows, under the guardianship of well-salaried
custodians, charged to maintain them always
in a state of brilliant polish. Here the noble
amateur in boots and blacking enjoyed his
morning walk for an hour every day; and it
was said that he took no small pleasure in ex-
hibiting his collection to curious strangers. The
idea naturally arises that his lordship was in-
sane; such, however, was not the fact, nor did
any other act of his life countenance the suppo-
sition.

We once knew a gentleman who had made a
fortune in commerce, and who, by a hobby,
had set his heart upon walking-sticks. Having
plenty of money at his command, he spent a
tolerable income annually in the purchase of
this very equivocal species of goods. He had
literally filled his own house to overflowing
with every attainable variety of prop, cane,
staff, and cudgel, from "the stick with two
butt-ends," as Paddy calls his shillelagh, to the
supple cane or elastic switch with which the
modern beau provides himself for his lounge in
Regent Street. A walking-stick, no matter of
what material, whether a sixpenny blackthorn
or a silver-headed Malacca, was a temptation
which he could not resist; he was never known
to relinquish one when he had once fairly
grasped it in his palm; it was so much easier to
pay the price of it. The shopkeepers of the
town knew his hobby well, and for many years
made a good market of his penchant for small
timber.

EATING WHEN SICK.—It is the custom among
a certain class of people, when a member of the
family falls sick, to begin at once to ask, "Now
what can you eat?" Every one has heard of
the old story of the man who always ate
eighteen apple dumplings when he was sick.
On one occasion when he was engaged upon
the eighteenth, his little son said: "Pa, give
me a piece." "No, no, my son," replied the
father, "go away; pa is sick." When a young
man has surfeited in season and out of season,
until exhausted nature gives way, and a fever
is coming on, the good mother is in trouble.
She anxiously inquires, "Now, John, what
can you eat? You must eat something! People
can't live without food!" Then come toast
and tea, etc. The stomach is exhausted, and
no more needs stimulating or food than a jaded
horse needs the whip. What is needed is rest.
Nine-tenths of the acute diseases might be pre-
vented by a few days' starvation when the first
indications appear. I don't mean complete
abstinence in every case, but perhaps a piece
of coarse bread, with cold water for drink. If
such a policy were generally adopted, what ruin
would overtake the medical profession. How
many physicians would lack for patients.—
Hearth and Home.

OUR ILLUSTRATION.

"MENDING THE OLD CRADLE."

This pleasing incident of domestic life in a
comfortable working-class family, which is the
subject of a picture by Mr. A. Stocks, shown at
the last Royal Academy Exhibition last year,
tells its own tale of happy marriage and parental
affection. We heartily congratulate the good
young husband and father upon his opportu-
nity of doing such a timely job of carpentry for
the sweet-looking woman and her baby, who
are watching his easy work. The artist may
have intended to suggest, by the introduction of
pussy and her kitten, a blessed truth of kindly
Nature's ways touching the universality of the
maternal instinct; or he may only have sought
to relieve the simplicity of his main subject
with a little by-play in that corner. Some doubt
will perhaps arise concerning the relation of the
little girl holding the kitten to the youthful
matron, whom we are glad to see doing so well
after her recent gift of a new recruit to the
army of humanity. It can scarcely be supposed,
in the absence of positive testimony, that she
is the mother of such a child, apparently nine
years old; and, if it were so, why then it would
be natural to look round for several interme-
diate brothers and sisters, who should have
taken their turns in the same cradle before the
advent of the present baby. We prefer to believe
that cherished and honored wife has been per-
mitted to invite her little sister, perhaps an
orphan, to share the modest home where the
love of an honest and industrious man has
placed her, not more than two or three sum-
mers ago; but, whatever be the date of their
happy union, they shall have our best wishes
for the future tenor of their peaceful life.

NEWS NOTES.

Senator Boutwell's health is precarious.
Lowenstein was hung at Albany on the 10th.
The Bishop of Pernambuco has been par-
doned.
The funeral of Dr. Livingstone took place on
the 18th inst.
The escape of Rochefort and companions is
officially confirmed.
The Portland Board of Trade adopted Anti-
inflation resolutions.
\$7,000 are offered for the arrest of the Austin
stage robbers in Texas.
Fifty convicts in the cabinet factory of Sing-
Sing Prison struck lately.
The murder of a man name Haywood and his
wife is reported from Ottawa, Ohio.
A majority of seventy-eight in the German
Reichstag voted for the Army Bill compro-
mise.
The Carlists have definitively rejected pro-
posals for a settlement made by Marshal Ser-
rano.
A horrible murder and subsequent lynching
of the prisoner is reported from Orange,
Texas.
An Austin despatch says the Brown County
Texans and the Border Indians have been
fighting.
The French Government has issued a circular
prohibiting newspaper attacks on the Sep-
tembate.
An Extradition Treaty between Salvador
and the United States has been officially pro-
mulgated.
A Calcutta despatch says the famine is in-
creasing in Tirhoot, over half a million persons
still suffering from starvation.
The Emperor Francis Joseph has sent a con-
ciliatory reply to the Pope's remonstrance
against the Ecclesiastical Bills.
A special from Calcutta says the famine is
everywhere under control, and further subscrip-
tions are considered superfluous.
The President considers it desirable that the
United States Government, should return to
specie payment as soon as practicable.
A Memphis despatch says the crevasse on the
Mississippi is now a hundred yards wide,
and fears of a general inundation are enter-
tained.
Among petitions for a Prohibitory Liquor-
Law presented in the House of Commons last
night, was one from London sixty-six feet in
length.
The Congressional Select Committee on
Transportation, report favorably on the im-
provement of the Erie Canal, to float 1,000 ton
vessels.
A compromise has been effected with regard
to the German Military Bill, limiting the
strength of the army to 400,000 men, and the
period of service to seven years.
Captain Brown and Jean Luie, witnesses for
the Tichborne claimant, have been found guilty
of perjury, and respectively sentenced to five
and seven years penal servitude.
A London despatch says Sir John Carslake
has resigned the Attorney-Generalship, in con-
sequence of ill-health, and that Sir Richard
Baggallay, the present Solicitor-General will
succeed him.
The Havana Official Gazette says that all
slaves furnished by the Government during
Jovellar's administration are to be organized as
soldiers under white officers, and after five years'
service are to be declared free.

ON THE RIVER.

BY ROB. RICHARDSON, B.A.

Our boat and we drift down the stream—
Down the stream :
My love is seated facing me,
With blue eyes that melting beam,
Lustrously as in a dream,
Full and shadowy.

Sultry glows the tropic sun,
But we two
Feel no whit the Summer heat
Floating where the shade is sweet,
Down the river's rippling flow,
Where the red-brown rushes grow,
Nodding in their cool retreat—

Floating in our cushioned skiff
Where we list,
All in the hot Australian noon,
What time we see a dim white moon
And languid Nature sinks to rest,
Slumbering with unruined breast
In a death-like swoon—

Down the river's curving reaches
Drifting slow,
Underneath a fragrant shade
By low-drooping branches made;
And in the purple tide below
Checkered shadows come and go—
Flash and flit and fade.

Oh, the warm Australian day—
Golden fair!
Unsullied skies! And over all
A drowsy stillness seems to fall,
A perfect hush is everywhere,
And the still and languid air
Is held in dreamy thrall.

May, with flitting summer smiles
On her lips,
Rows one had, all lily white,
Through the waters blue and bright;
And from her rosy finger-tips
The crystal water sparkling-drips
In liquid gems of light.

Defly, my love, you work the helm,
Sweetest May!
And on my lazy oars I bide,
White all unhelped of sail we slide
Adown the river's peaceful tide,
Like that maid of olden day,
Pictured in the poet's lay,
Whom the stream bore far away
By Camelot's rocky side.

Your broad-brimmed hat too jealously
Hides in good sooth
All the rare beauty of your eyes,
Where the melting lustre lies,
And the laughter lives and dies;
While on your cheek and on your mouth
Flushes the red blood of the South,
And the warmth of Austral skies.

As on we glide come liquid strains
Our ears to greet;
Sweet chords from many a hidden throat
On the drowsy stillness float—
The warbling oriole, low and sweet,
And the purple lorikeet,
A sharp fantastic note.

But, mute for very happiness,
You and I,
Watch the braided ripples run
On and on, on and on,
Or follow with a lazy eye
The circles of the dragon-fly,
Now darting with a glitter by,
Now poising bright against the sky,
Blazing golden in the sun.

O that we might thus for ever
And for ever
While a changeless life away
In an endless Summer day,
Where the world's rude shocks could never
Come between our loves to sever,
Floating down the peaceful river,
On for aye and aye!

TRUE GOLD.

BY A. K.

There had been a railway accident near the little village. Some carriages had left the rails, and lay crushed and shattered by the bank, the cries of the passengers thrilling painfully through the quiet evening air. Men who were harvesting close by flung down their sickles and hastened to help; kind-hearted women came running from the cottages to give eager assistance.

Mr. Reginald Garth was sitting at tea with his sister in the little rose-shadowed porch, after a long day's ride to his patients, when the sad tidings were brought by half-a-dozen imperative voices calling for the "doctor." He hastened into the surgery for some surgical appliances, told Miss Lottie to prepare to receive some of the sufferers, and hastened across the meadows, that were glowing with sunset light,

till he reached the spot, where most of the passengers had been rescued from their terrible position. Some of them had struggled out, and sat on the bank, faint and trembling, but unhurt; others lay still and senseless; some were dead.

Mr. Garth took the lead at once in that horror-stricken crowd, and sent for hurdles and soft coverings to convey the wounded to shelter. Those who, unhurt themselves, had friends among the stricken, crowded round the young surgeon in painful eagerness.

"Look at my child!" exclaimed a tall, hand-woman in frenzied accents. "Oh! doctor do something for him!"

Mr. Garth bent over the little form lying so calmly on the grass, with a look of peace on the white face. Hot tears rose in the tender-hearted surgeon's eyes.

"He will never wake again on earth, madam," he said, gently.

"You're wanted more over here, doctor," called a big farmer from the village, touching Mr. Garth as he tried to ease to pain of a man who had received a terrible blow on the shoulder. Mr. Garth followed the speaker quickly.

Just drawn out of the debris and laid on the bank were two young women. The farmer's wife was kneeling beside them, chafing the small white hands of the younger. Mr. Garth stopped at the first for a few moments.

"Dead!" he said, sadly, and he passed on to the other, whose head was resting on the shoulder of the farmer's wife. Her hat had fallen off, and her short curly brown hair was matted with blood that still trickled in a tiny stream over her light travelling dress.

Mr. Garth bound up the wound carefully, looking with grave pity at the fair young face. "She will require the greatest care—I fear the worst."

"We will take both of them to Budleigh," said the farmer, who had summoned his spring-cart—"they seem as if they were together."

"Mistress and maid," suggested the surgeon.

They were laid in the thick straw, the living and dead together, and taken gently across the grass field to the low-roofed farmhouse. The surgeon had two of the most severely wounded moved to his own house, and the rest found eagerly offered care and shelter elsewhere.

Soon the spot was still again where the terrible tragedy had taken place, and the stars shone down from the quiet autumn sky.

All night the surgeon and a physician who had been summoned from London were busy. In the gray light of the morning they were called to Budleigh. The young lady had roused from her swoon in feverish delirium. The two men held a consultation over the case.

"Her friends should be sent for," and the physician. "Is she known?" No; none of the passengers knew her, or remembered at what station she had got in. The farmer's wife produced a pocket-book and a letter, and a handsome silver card-case, which had been found in the pocket of the wounded girl.

"Margaret Wardour"—that was the name on the cards; and the letter had the same superscription, and was signed with the name of a well-known London lawyer. It contained an inquiry as to when a promised interview about some business was to take place.

Mr. Garth wrote out a brief message to the lawyer on the back of his letter, and sent it off to the nearest telegraph office by the farmer's man.

It was in the middle of the coroner's inquest, while the surgeon was giving his evidence, that the lawyer arrived.

His first act was to identify the body of the young woman who had been found with Margaret Wardour. It was that of Miss Wardour's maid, as the surgeon had surmised—Sarah Weston, aged twenty-eight. When the inquest was over, the lawyer shook his head at the suggestion that the young lady's friends should be sent for.

"To the best of my belief she has no friends," he told the surgeon—"in England, at any rate. Till within the last few weeks she had resided in a German school as English governess. Before that she was in India."

"Has she no relations or guardians?" asked Mr. Garth.

"She is of age," said the lawyer. "Poor girl, it would be hard for her to die! She has just succeeded, as the last of the family, to a very large fortune. She must have every care, Mr. Garth."

"Of course," answered the surgeon.

The lawyer went back by the next train, and the friendless heiress lay hovering between life and death. Youth and care, however, won the battle at last, light slowly came back to the dark eyes, and the surgeon could hope for the best.

The farmer had no children, but there was a little girl who had come in the summer to stay at the farmhouse, a little town-bred, shy creature, who had few childlike ways about her. A great friendship was struck up between Miss Wardour and this child—a friendship that was very strange in its quiet depth and intensity. When the dark winter days came, and the invalid could walk a little up and down the garden, little Ida was always her companion, walking soberly beside her, talking in the low hushed tone that in a child is painfully eloquent of a crushed heart. She made Miss Wardour the confidant of all her sorrows, and Margaret soon understood as well as the child the old life that had been so strange and mournful.

The beautiful young mother had died when Ida was four years old, leaving her little girl only the memory of a sweet face. Margaret

loved to hear Ida speak of her, feeling a keen sympathy with the young child's loneliness.

"Tell me something about you," Ida would say sometimes; and Miss Wardour would tell her of her happy life in India with her father and sister.

"And did they both die, like mamma?" the child asked one day.

"Yes, papa is dead, and Nina is lost;" and Margaret's face shadowed with pain.

"Lost?" inquired the child curiously.

"Yes. We lost her years ago. She was much older than I was; and I remember her so well. She had eyes like yours, Ida."

Thus they would converse, walking up and down in the brief morning sunlight, or sitting by the pleasant fireside. Miss Wardour seemed in no hurry to leave the farm, and the owners were only too glad to keep her there. A dainty little pony-carriage was added to the establishment, and Margaret drove about the country lanes with Ida by her side. They often met the young surgeon on his horse, and he would raise his hat, or stop and shake hands, and murmur some commonplace about the weather, and inquire after Miss Wardour's health in a cold professional manner, very unlike his frank genial heartiness with people in general.

Through the depth of that winter he never came to the farm for weeks together, though often in his homeward ride at night he would stop at the garden gate and listen to Margaret's sweet voice singing old German ballads that thrilled the surgeon's heart. The heiress loved to sing, and these sad refrains haunted the young man through his daily work.

"You are working too hard, Rex," said his sister, one evening, after she had been silently watching his pale thoughtful face for some time. "Why don't you drink your tea?"

"I was thinking," he replied, and he started and raised his cup to his lips.

"Thinking! You are always thinking! Why can't you be content with your practice, and leave those old books alone? What's the good of all your study and thinking, I should like to know, Rex?"

"It gives me something to do," he said, and he smiled at her as he stirred his tea.

"You don't need that, I'm sure. Your patients keep you pretty well occupied. There," as the bell sounded—"you can't have your tea in peace!"

The interruption came in the shape of a note. Mr. Garth read it and put it down by his plate.

"It is from Miss Wardour," he said to his sister. "She wants me to go over to Budleigh."

"Ill again?" questioned Miss Lottie, rather sharply. "It's little Ida then. The child seems to be ailing, and they are nervous about her. There's no great hurry."

He finished his tea, hardly hearing his sister Lottie's grumbling remarks about people in general. She brought his overcoat and umbrella—for the rain was coming down fast—and made him wrap up his throat warmly.

"You are an ungrateful boy!" she remarked as he resisted the infliction of a large muffler. "Your wife won't have half such forethought for you!" Reginald sighed, as he went out through the little passage.

"I should like to see Miss Wardour's writing," thought Miss Garth as she went back to the tea-table and looked about for the little note. But it was gone.

The pleasant sitting-room at the farm was aglow with light. Tea was over, and Mrs. Evans, the farmer's wife, had gone out, on household thoughts intent. Ida lay sleeping on a low sofa by the fire, and Miss Wardour sat by her side, looking gravely at the leaping red flames. Her face was still pale and delicate from her recent illness, though a soft exquisite color tinged her cheeks. She was looking very pretty and graceful in a blue silk dress trimmed with costly white lace round the open sleeves and square-cut bodice.

Tokens of wealth were scattered over the room, giving a strange bizarre appearance to its quaint furniture—beautiful books, a harp and piano, some handsome statuettes and pictures, and numberless little trifles that told of the presence of one to whom money was a small consideration.

Hark! There was a step on the garden path. Miss Wardour rose, went out softly, and opened the hall door. The light streamed after her, making to the eyes of Mr. Garth a fair picture of that slight graceful figure in the blue dress.

"Good evening, Mr. Garth. Ida is asleep. You are wet, I fear."

"It is raining," he said, briefly, taking off his overcoat.

"Have you had tea?" asked Miss Wardour. "I hope my note did not bring you out in this wretched weather."

"Weather is never studied by a doctor, Miss Wardour," he said. "My patient is asleep, then?" He stopped by the sofa as he spoke.

"Hush! Please don't wake her. You won't mind waiting for a while."

"Oh, no." He sat down by the table, and Margaret went quietly out of the room. She came back in a few minutes with a little tray, bearing a cup of tea and a few delicate slices of bread-and-butter, and put it down before the surgeon.

"Your sister will scold me for bringing you out," she said, gaily.

"Oh, Miss Wardour, why did you trouble yourself—I had finished tea."

"Come, you must drink it. Do you take sugar? I hope the tea will be strong enough."

With a flush on his grave face he took the cup

from her hands. Something of his thought Margaret guessed, for she too blushed very prettily, and rose and stood on the hearth-rug. Mr. Garth rose too, and stood opposite her, with the cup of tea in his hand.

"You don't favor us often with your visits, Mr. Garth," observed Margaret, with a little reproach in her manner.

"I have struck you off the sick-list, you know, Miss Wardour."

"Yes, I am quite well now. If I had not fallen into such good hands, I should have died, I feel sure."

"It takes a good deal to conquer youth," observed the surgeon.

"It was all so kindly done," said Miss Wardour, not noticing the last remark. "And you would all have been as kind if I had not been rich, I know."

"Of course," responded the surgeon, rather coldly.

Tears were gathering in Miss Wardour's dark violet eyes, and her voice trembled as she spoke. She looked up in the young surgeon's face. He put the cup on the chimney-piece, and gazed steadily at the fire. One glance at the shy sweet eyes, and he felt his resolve would fail him. Miss Wardour sat down in her low chair by the sofa, and played restlessly with her ring. Ida was still asleep. The firelight leaped and flickered over the two troubled faces.

"What ought I to do with my money?" said Miss Wardour, suddenly. "It is a terrible responsibility; I almost wish it were buried in the sea."

Mr. Garth looked down at her; her eyes were drooping, and she did not see that tender, regretful glance.

"Ah, you don't know what money can give, Miss Wardour—flattery, luxury, ease, admiration, friends."

"Ah, no! You must stop there. Friends it can never give. My only friends in England are in this little village—this child, and Mr. and Mrs. Evans, and you," she added, hesitatingly—"you are my friend, are you not?"

She looked up wistfully at him, but his eyes were bent steadily on the fire. For a moment he hesitated. Wild words were trembling on his lips, but he kept them back, and said, earnestly—

"I hope I am. May I take the privilege of a friend and speak frankly to you?"

"Yes, indeed," was her ready reply.

"Don't be angry—don't think me presumptuous—but, Miss Wardour, you ought not to stay here. Your wealth gives you the right to occupy a position in society very different from this—it is your duty to take it. It is for a wise purpose that riches have come to you; and you should not shrink from meeting your responsibilities, forgive me if I have said too much."

Miss Wardour did not answer. She sat looking straight before her, every vestige of color gone from her face.

"Do you really think that I ought to go back again into the wide world?" she said at last, in a low hoarse whisper.

"You will find there better friends, a more fitting home than you can have here. We shall all miss you."

"Thank you," she said, after a pause, and she put her hand up over her eyes. "I will think it over."

They did not break the silence again till Ida awoke and Mrs. Evans came in. Mr. Garth said that Ida's illness would soon pass off, being merely a slight cold, and he ordered the child to bed.

He went away before Margaret came back from seeing Ida warm and asleep in her little cot. Miss Wardour did not notice his absence. She sat down by the fire and talked to Mrs. Evans, and her harp was left untouched.

Some evenings afterward there was party at the Rectory. Margaret was there, the centre of attraction to the half-dozen gentleman-farmers and curates that composed the male portion of the company. She was talking gaily, late in the evening, to one of her clerical admirers when the surgeon entered. He sat down near the door, chatting to his hostess, and Margaret watched him furtively in the intervals of her mild flirtation.

"Ah, there's Garth!" said her companion, following her glance. "What a plain fellow he is!"

Miss Wardour raised her eyebrows in some astonishment. The surgeon's face was a very fine one, though with little regular beauty.

"You don't agree with me? Well, the ladies generally do like his look—he is a great favorite."

Margaret changed the subject, not caring to discuss the surgeon's character. He came over presently and shook hands with her.

"Are you enjoying yourself?" he asked.

"Is that spoken in malice *prepense*?" Margaret returned, ignoring the curate altogether. He moved away, and the surgeon took the vacant seat.

"You are looking tired, Miss Wardour," he said, kindly. "Don't overtax your strength."

"Oh no. I am going away. I have taken your advice. There is an old friend of my father's now in London—General Macarthy. I am going on a long visit to him, and shall be presented at Court, I believe, and 'come out.' Oh dear!"

"You will find London very different from this," he said.

"I suppose so. Remember, Mr. Garth, you told me to go. I would have stayed if you—"

She stopped short, and colored deeply and painfully.

"You mistake yourself," said the surgeon, in

a low tone; "you think you would be happy here always, but such would not be the case. What you have missed would always haunt you, and make a dark side to the brightest picture."

"And my feelings have nothing to do with your advice?" said Miss Wardour, half-questioningly. Mr. Garth made no answer.

"I am going," she added, after a pause—"going to-morrow."

"I hope you will be happy—I am sure you will," he said warmly.

"Thank you," she returned, briefly. Somebody claimed her attention at that moment, and conversation was broken off. Mr. Garth saw little of her after that—and on the morrow she was going!

Next morning there was a good deal of bustle at Budleigh—Miss Wardour was going away. She stood dressed in the sitting room, sobbing bitterly, with Ida in her arms, when Mrs. Evans came in with a telegram in her hand.

"See here, Miss Wardour. What am I to do?"

Margaret read the message.

"From Lady Dryburne to Mr. Evans, Budleigh.—Send Miss Ida Gay at once to Tremleigh—Lord Dryburne is very ill."

"Ida's guardian," remarked the heiress. "What can they want with the child?"

"She must go," said the farmer's wife. "Tremleigh is right the other side of the county. What am I to do?"

"I will take her there," answered Margaret: "she can go with me now, and I can go on to London afterwards."

Mrs. Evans caught eagerly at the proposal. Ida was soon dressed, and she and Miss Wardour drove at once to the station.

Tremleigh was reached in a couple of hours. Margaret left her luggage in charge of a porter, and went with Ida down the short stretch of road that led to Lord Dryburne's residence.

"Do you know your guardian?" she asked of Ida.

The child's description was of one who was very kind, but who had never touched the affections of that little lonely heart. She had seen him only when fresh arrangements had had to be made about her home, owing to change and death.

Margaret started when she entered the gates of the garden. All the blinds of the house were down. Death was there. She went up to the door, and rang the muffled bell. The servant took her card, and showed her into a little ante-room. In a few minutes a stately woman, with a face whose quiet anguish was sad to see, made her appearance. She took Ida's hand and kissed her forehead before she spoke to Margaret.

"You are too late," she said. "Lord Dryburne died an hour ago. You are Ida's aunt, I suppose?"

"Her aunt?" cried Margaret. "Oh, no!"

"Your name led me to think so," observed the lady. "Her mother's name was Wardour." A thousand undreamed-of coincidences began to crowd on Margaret's mind.

"Forgive me, madam. Do you know the Christian name?"

"My husband's first wife was called Nina Wardour; and, seeing Margaret's startled face, she added, "Our family name is Gay."

"She was my sister," said Margaret, in a choked voice. "Madam, was she Lord Dryburne's wife?"

"Yes. I never knew it till yesterday. It is a sad, sad story. She died years ago, Miss Wardour."

"She left her home without a word," observed Margaret, sorrowfully. "My father died not knowing whether she was dead or living. We never knew that she was married. Forgive me, dear madam—you are in great trouble."

"My husband repented bitterly of the wrong he had done your sister by not allowing her to write to her family. Fear of his own kept him from avowing the marriage, and, when she died so young, the temptation was great to let the past still rest in oblivion. He told me all yesterday, and left me his child to take care of. I have none of my own. Will you leave her with me, Miss Wardour? It will help me to bear my trouble. We have only been married a year," she added.

The shock of the discovery was very great. Margaret sat still, with her niece's hand tightly clasped in her own, thinking sadly. Time passed swiftly on, and she must catch her train. Ida was somewhat unwilling to be left, and Margaret's heart was almost broken to leave her now that a new tie of love was between them. But there was no help for it. Lady Dryburne was her rightful guardian, and seemed anxious to take a mother's place to the little orphaned waif. Margaret went back to the station alone thinking it all over, and calling up the memories of her dead sister, and the handsome young nobleman who had persuaded her to leave her father's house.

The train was nearing London, when another thought came upon her like a terrible surprise. Ida was her sister's child. Her sister was the elder, and consequently, had she lived, would have been rightful heiress to the wealth that had come to Margaret. Hence it belonged to Ida—Ida was the heiress.

Margaret was thoroughly unselfish, but she would have been more than human not to feel a keen sense of regret at the loss of what had been so pleasant to contemplate. Presently yet another idea, born of that painful chain of thought, occurred to her, and nestled deep down in her troubled, aching heart like a sweet message of peace.

General Macarthy was waiting at Euston Station for his visitor, and very soon she was seated in a gay London drawing-room, receiving the polished welcome of Lady Jane, the General's pretty, *blâsée* wife. Margaret was petted and caressed as much as she could have wished, had it all been real.

The dinner party consisted of the family and a few select visitors; and for the first time Margaret was introduced to London society. It was a brilliant scene, one that she remembered ever afterwards. The bright room, the dazzling lights, the company so exquisitely dressed, so perfect in manner—all made up a whole that dazzled and bewildered Miss Wardour. For that evening she received the honors of the heiress with a graceful dignity that charmed her host. Lady Jane embraced the young girl affectionately when she bade her good night.

"We must love each other very much," she said; "and when you are a little more accustomed to us, you will feel at home. Charles will be home next week from Windsor. He is in the Guards, you know."

Margaret smiled to herself when her hostess was gone.

"To-morrow," she thought—"ah, I shall distinguish gold from tinsel soon."

The morrow dawned, and Margaret sent a letter to her lawyer, requesting him to call upon her. Till then she listened to Lady Jane's florid compliments, and thought of the little country village far away.

The lawyer came, and Margaret went down to the library and told her story. She was quite prepared for his answer. She knew what it would be; and yet the news caused a keener pang when told by him.

"It is a great blow to you," the lawyer remarked, kindly. "I am very sorry."

"I must leave you to make all arrangements, and tell me what I have to do," said Margaret. "I will give you Lady Dryburne's address—she is Ida's guardian, it seems."

The lawyer took his departure, and Margaret went back to the drawing-room to take her true position.

"Is the terrible business over?" asked Lady Jane. "What a thing it is to be troubled with money!"

"I shall not be troubled with it long," observed Margaret.

"Ah, you want somebody to help you to take care of it," commented Lady Jane; "very wise of you, my dear."

"I don't mean that. I have been sailing under false colors, Lady Jane. This money isn't mine really—it belongs to my sister's daughter. I have just made arrangements for giving it up."

"Your sister!" cried Lady Jane. "You are joking!"

"No; I was the younger, you know, and this fortune didn't belong to me at all—it's a miserable mistake; and she recited the principal events of the story.

Lady Jane's face grew colder and colder as the certainty of Margaret's loss became apparent. She uttered the usual condolences that rise to people's lips in any trouble.

"I would offer you a home here," she said, hesitatingly, "but Charlie is so expensive, and really—"

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, please; I shall go back to my teaching in Germany. I am accustomed to be poor. Thank you very much for your hospitality, Lady Jane; I will go back to-day to Budleigh."

"What! Won't you stay a day or two?" exclaimed her ladyship, looking intensely relieved.

"No, thank you; the sooner I get to work again the better."

"And I dare say you have plenty of friends?" said Lady Jane.

"Oh, yes; you know I have been an heiress for six months," returned Margaret, smiling. She could smile, now, even though she had discovered of what tinsel the friendship of yesterday was composed.

General Macarthy was a little more cordial than his wife, but they were both much relieved to see Margaret depart in the express. She went by the express though no longer an heiress—her heart was throbbing with impatience to get back to Budleigh.

It was still bright daylight when she arrived at the station, and, leaving her luggage to be sent on, she walked along the footpaths that led from the station to the village.

She passed the meadow over which she had been carried more dead than alive on that autumn evening. The sun was setting now as she walked up the garden path of the farmhouse and into the old-fashioned sitting-room. Mrs. Evans was there, mending socks.

"My dear Miss Wardour—my child!" Margaret put her arms round her, and laid her head on the motherly breast, crying, in sheer excitement and nervousness:

"I am going to Germany, and I came back to see you all again. I have lost all my money, Mrs. Evans."

It was long before the farmer's wife could understand that little Ida was the heiress and Margaret's niece, and that she was never coming back to the farm any more. Margaret had to tell the story over again to Mr. Evans, and it was late for their primitive life when the household retired to rest.

Margaret's eyes had not closed the night before. She slept soundly now in her old room, and it was late in the morning before she awoke.

After breakfast she wrote to Lady Dryburne and Ida, and to the principal of the school where she had been English teacher for some

years. The day was bright and fair, indeed quite spring-like, and, putting on her hat and shawl, she went out to post her letters.

The post-office was on the other side of the village, but there was a path that led to it by the fields, and very pleasant it was that morning. Margaret reached the last stile and sat down to rest on the broad step. The road took a sudden curve into the village just beyond, but no sound or sight of human life reached her here. The morning sunshine gleamed over the flat green landscape. The birds sang in the trees overhead. A breath of waking life was in the air. Margaret sat and looked round on the beauty of the scene, and thought, if all else were lost, this would remain, and heaven be bright above.

The sound of a man's voice humming a tune came through the clear air. It drew nearer with a man's quick step. Margaret recognised, in some surprise, the air of one of her German songs. A sudden wild tremor seized her as voice and step came nearer. She started up, and walked quickly back along the field, her face flushing deeply. The man jumped over the stile, and she heard the voice stop, and the steps grow quicker as he recognised her. At the next stile she stopped, for the step sounded close at hand. She turned and held out her hand.

"I have surprised you, Mr. Garth."

"You have; but it is a pleasant surprise," he said, though he looked even more pale and troubled than she did. "Are you going to Budleigh?"

"Yes—to the post," replied Margaret.

"This way then," he said, with a smile, which brought the color back to her cheeks. She turned, and he turned with her.

"I thought you were going to London, Miss Wardour?"

"I have been, and I had some strange experiences since I saw you last. I have lost my money for one thing, and I have found a niece for another."

Mr. Garth looked incredulous.

"I will tell you the whole story," she said.

By this time they had reached the stile again, and Margaret sat down on the step and recited her recent experiences. Reginald listen, his face changing almost every minute.

"I've done with the heiress-ship and its troubles," said Margaret, in conclusion. "Don't you wish me joy of being an independent person once more? I am going back to Germany next week."

"You took my advice once, you know," said Mr. Garth, rather unsteadily.

"Yes. But I am no heiress now, and can please myself."

"But you will let me give you one more bit of advice," entreated Mr. Garth, "only this once—I will promise never to obtrude in like manner again."

"Well, what is it? Don't make it as long as Mentor's remarks to poor Telemachus."

"Don't go to Germany," said Mr. Garth, in a low voice. "Stay here. When I said you ought to go to London, I loved you better than myself, and my very love gave me strength to beg you to take your right position in the world. But now, Margaret—"

The intense earnestness of his manner checked the light words that rose to her lips. In happy silence she sat listening to the manly avowal of his love. He had no need of words from her to learn her decision. It was written on the blushing face and in the drooping eyes.

"I love you better than you do me," asserted Miss Wardour, saucily, as they walked up and down the footpath.

"Little Miss Ignorance!" he retorted, smiling.

"I do. I would have married you if you had had fifty thousand a year, or twice as much. You would have made us both miserable because I was the lucky owner (apparently) of a good share of this world's goods."

"If I had had the money, it would have been all right," he answered.

"You were proud, sir—confess it!" she demanded, imperiously.

"O Margaret!" was all he answered.

Five years have elapsed since Margaret's marriage day. She stands in her garden with a baby in her arms, and two more children tumbling on the grass close beside her. She is waiting for her husband—for they are lovers yet, still in the happy fairy land of courtship. They have had their share of vexations and cares. The surgeon's income is not large, and Margaret has to work hard to make things meet. But the bills somehow get paid, and the children grow and prosper, and not a shadow has yet fallen on the wedded love of the Garths.

As Margaret stands and waits, singing softly to her baby, a carriage comes up the hill and stops at the gate.

Margaret gives the child to the nurse, and goes to greet her visitors—a stately lady and a tall slight girl with thin white cheeks that have a spot of hectic color on them. The girl throws herself into Mrs. Garth's arms with a half-hysterical exclamation.

"Oh, aunt Margaret, I have come back to you—I have come back to die!"

It is a great surprise, for when Margaret last heard they were travelling in the South for Ida's health. She leads her visitors in, while Lady Dryburne explains how Ida has grown weaker and weaker, and how she has longed to see her aunt and home once more.

Mr. Garth, looking little older, comes in, and welcomes his guests warmly. He sighs as he looks at Ida's face. It is too true—she has come back to die. A few short months, full of tender care, pass, and the frail little blossom fades and

dies. All that love and wealth can do is done, but all is of no avail to keep back the sickle of the Reaper.

Ida was gone, and the wealth that Margaret had lost came back to her. She was again a rich woman; and the money seemed to bring poor little Ida's blessing with it to the surgeon's home.

Wealth to him and Margaret meant so much added help and comfort to the sick and suffering around them—so much more opportunity of doing good.

Such lives as they lead must be happy, whatever troubles come.

IN A DREAM.

There came to my couch in the dead of the night,

With a smile of love and an eye of light,
A beautiful angel on quivering wing,
With a voice like that of which poets sing,
And bade me to list while he breathed a strain
That should bring back my blossoming years again.

I listened with rapture, and quickly to me
Came brothers, and sisters in innocent glee;
The old happy home and the old happy bow-
ers,
The ivy-hung walls and the garden of flowers,
While my spirit bowed under a spell of delight
And worshipped the God of the day and the night.

The vision had passed, like a star-beam, away
Ere the orient heavens grew crimson and gay,
And vainly I gazed for the light, like the sun,
That circled the form of the beautiful one,
Who wove the bewitching and wonderful strain
That carried me back to my childhood again.

Yet I woke not to sorrow, nor sighing, nor care,
For the green fields of living were dazlingly fair;

Nor would I go back to the young years again,
Since the present are dearer, tho' fuller of pain;
Yet sometimes I sigh for the bower so bright,
And the red lips I kissed in a dream of the night.

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

Horace Kent was a dashing sort of fellow who had, in the six weeks at the quiet country-side hotel, taken captive not only Ada Burton's heart, but the hearts of several other girls.

He knew it well enough.

He had often and often watched the kindling bloom on Ada's face, and seen the quick averted glance she gave him—or did not give him.

It was very pleasant, very pleasant indeed, only he wished that Ada was not so desperately smitten; that she would not be in a hurry for the proposal he knew she expected, and which he certainly meant to honor her with in his own good time.

Meanwhile, it was very delightful to be lawfully, if not morally, privileged to flirt with proud, marble-faced Stella Urvin or the charming Mrs. Carlington.

He was selfish.

He thoroughly liked his own way, and hated to be "bored," even by the society of ladies, when he was not in the humor for it.

He adjusted his Panama—so becoming, and he knew it—for a stroll off somewhere, where he could be utterly, entirely alone.

A certain secluded spot, a mile beyond the boat-house, he knew of a velvet-turfed lawn, overshadowed with low spreading apple trees, and completely shut in with a thick undergrowth of bushes, high as a man's head.

He sauntered round the turnpike, and climbed a fence to gain admission to the rural spot.

The sun was terribly hot, and the cool grass delightfully refreshing, with the thick, leafy canopy overhead, and the fragrance of the apples on the still, drowsy air.

He threw himself at full length on the grass, his hands for a pillow under his head.

Two voices, precisely opposite him, on the other side of the thorn-bushes, smote his ears.

"Delightful? It is not enough to melt any one, unless it's that salamander of yours, Ada; he doesn't seem to care at all for the heat."

It was May Voici who spoke—a nervous, ready-tongued little witch, Kent's especial aversion.

Mrs. Lillie Carlington's sweet, gracious voice—perhaps like all widow's voices, slightly affected—rebuked May Voici.

"I am sure he is only fortunate in the extreme if he can endure our summers."

"Well," and a strong, fresh voice Horace Kent recognised as Bertha Lyon's, "whatever Mrs. Carlington thinks of little May's opinion of the gentleman under discussion, she certainly will be horrified when I express my unqualified opinion, and I say I think Mr. Horace Kent an unmitigated rascal."

A silence that was almost heard followed her bold speech, and Mr. Kent stroked his moustache complacently, and remembered he had rather slighted Miss Lyon the night before, which doubtless accounted for her opinion.

"Just wait until Hugh comes," Bertha went on, a little hotly, "and we'll see if Mr. Kent can flirt and flirt with little Ada Burton, and

nearly break her heart, and never say the word a man ought to say, and would say, if he wasn't what I know he is, an unmitigated scoundrel."

Bertha was fanning herself vigorously, and Mrs. Carlington was curling her lip in silent sarcasm.

"I presume Mr. Kent can manage his own affairs, however disposed your brother, Mr. Hugh Lyon, may be to assist him."

"I presume he won't have the chance, then, retorted Bertha, hotly. "When Hugh comes, he and Ada are agreed to get up a first-class flirtation, and goad Mr. Horace Kent into the offer he is bound to make—though goodness knows what Ada sees in him to admire, I don't."

Mrs. Carlington arched her pretty neck, as she languidly arose.

"What say you to a row, if old Sandy is aroused to take us?"

And then the quartette flitted away, utterly unconscious of the masculine element on the other side of the fence.

"So that's the way the wind blows, is it?"

He laughed outright at the good luck that had led them into a trap; he was utterly rejoiced at the prospect of more fun ahead for the fortnight he was to remain at M—.

"Little Ada will have her conquest all to herself," he colloquized; "I'll let Mr. Hugh flirt with her, and I'll flirt with Mrs. Carlington, and if they think to make me jealous—well, let 'em try."

He got up, dusted his clothes, plucked a twig off the apple tree and stuck it in his button-hole and sauntered back.

"But I'll not let her slip, even to please them; after her play is over, and I've proved my unmitigated rascals, I'll tell little Ada I love her, and have loved her all along."

Then he went up to his room, past Ada Burton's door, and he heard her singing a song he had played the night before for her.

"You're sure you're entirely agreed, Miss Burton?—you are sure I may flirt with you to my heart's content?"

It was a wondrously thrilling voice that spoke in a confidential tone to Ada, and she looked up to see a pair of merry searching eyes bent in a very decided admiration on her crimson cheeks.

"Of course, that is a bargain," said Bertha, "only mind you, Hugh Lyon, you are not to fall in love with her—is he to, Ada?"

"I am afraid that I shall," Mr. Hugh Lyon laughed, then gave Ada his arm into the apartment where the music was sounding.

Horace Kent was inside the door—just where Ada had hoped he would be, when she came in, in her triumph—only, and she had not expected that—Mrs. Lillie Carlington was on his arm, laughing and chatting in the most familiar manner.

Ada felt her heart sicken for one second, and then she bowed to them, and went on with Hugh.

Ada's spirit would not stay out of her eyes; her cheeks would flush and pale alternately as she stole sly glances at the handsome fellow who had made such an impression on her.

Hugh Lyon saw her distress, and pitied her from the depths of his kindly heart, and wondered how on earth any fellow blessed with the affection of such a sweet girl as Ada Burton could help striving mightily to hold it.

"They don't seem to care," whispered Ada, piteously.

"We don't make it strong enough," he said, cheerily. "Let's get in front of them, and whisper, and be dreadfully confidential!"

And so Hugh cut across the room with Ada, and in front of Kent and the widow, whispered to perfection.

But "forewarned was forearmed," and Kent smiled serenely, and the beautiful widow thought Bertha Lyon's plan suited her remarkably.

Then came the supper, and a thinning out of guests, until only a few friends remained.

Mr. Lyon and Ada came up in time to catch Mrs. Carlington's last words.

"We cannot fail to enjoy it thoroughly. Our party will be so select—Miss Burton, you will go to the ruins to-morrow? Mr. Lyon, your sister has promised you to our impromptu picnic."

"With pleasure I shall go. Kent, you're booked, of course?"

"If Ada—if Miss Burton will allow me the pleasure of her company."

He bowed, smiled, and looked so handsome; and poor Ada flushed to radiance.

"I don't know about that," returned Hugh, magnificently; "I am disposed to fight, if needs be—for the honor of being Miss Ada's escort. You'll not refuse me?"

He gave her such a look; it thrilled her through and through, for all it was in jest.

No, she would not refuse him—to punish Horace Kent.

"I shall be happy to go with you, Mr. Lyon. You will excuse me, of course, Mr. Kent."

And Kent bowed perfectly at ease.

"Certainly—with pleasure. Mrs. Carlington can console me, I venture to say."

His eyes, his voice were so sarcastic, that Hugh wheeled Ada around, and took her out into the cool air.

"That fellow is an insufferable puppy—not worth even the anxious widow's regards. I am so glad you are going to-morrow with me, Ada. I may as well recite my lesson in private as in public, mayn't I?"

Somehow, her eyes went down before his, and her heart stirred strangely.

If Horace would only be so good.

And the morrow was a success.

Hugh was the life of the party, and Ada felt a pleasant sort of pride in him, because she and Bertha loved each other so, doubtless.

And Mr. Kent and the widow had it all their own way, even to Horace's lying on the grass at her feet, and reading Tennyson to her. Ada stumbled over them once.

Mr. Kent's first impulse had been to spring up; his second, to remain where he was, and show her she was not particularly essential to his enjoyment of the day.

So he nodded quite indifferently as she passed, while Mrs. Carlington, in a burst of triumphant malice, suddenly exclaimed, in Ada's hearing—

"Oh, Horace, do repeat that exquisite verse again."

She had the satisfaction of seeing a blush surge over the back of Ada's neck, and the next minute she managed to flush guiltily herself.

"Oh, Mr. Kent, I am so ashamed of myself! But I was completely carried away with that sweet verse you read from 'Eleanore.' Please forgive me, and I will promise never to call you so again."

She certainly was very pretty.

The scene was a favorable one, the time, the place, and so, thrilled by her honeyed voice, her floating hair that almost touched his own, Horace Kent leaned near her, and for answer repeated again the verse from "Eleanore,"—hardly meaning what he said, but feeling some delightful sensation that lent a passionate thrill to his words.

And the while, Ada Burton went back to Hugh Lyon, a sweet dream broken, a heart suddenly shorn of its idol.

And, Horace Kent, his infrequent bursts of enthusiasm evaporated by the time the passionate verse was repeated, thought what a precious pair of fools they were.

"Going away! Oh Mr. Lyon."

For the life of her, Ada could not help it, that sharp, sudden wail of hers.

Then, in shame-facedness, she began repeating stale, stereotyped wishes for his safety and happiness.

He listened with a half savage smile.

"It will be delightful happiness, Ada, that I'm going to—the leaving Kent here to reap the reward of my labors."

"But he will not—I mean you have been very kind to me, very, Mr. Ly—"

He grasped her hands that lay idly on the piano keys.

"Kind? Only kind? Perhaps, but horribly cruel to myself. I've been playing with fire, and been hopelessly scorched."

Her heart was bounding with delirious bliss.

She, too, had played with fire, and she stole a glance at his stern face; he caught the look, and his eyes grew radiant.

"Ada, Ada, tell me, is my love helpless?"

"Hugh, as if such a one as you could come but to conquer."

Wasn't that satisfactory enough for any lover?

And Hugh took his just deserts in the form of sundry kisses, and low murmurous vows, just as Mr. Horace Kent lounged in, easy, handsome, lazy.

"Oh! a thousand pardons. My congratulations, Miss Burton."

Then he lounged out with smothered curses on his lips, and a fiercer feeling than he had ever felt before that he was outmaneuvered after all.

Did he marry his widow friend?

Not at all, although after that selection from Eleanore, she chose to regard herself Mr. Horace Kent's special delight—until the morning when Ada announced her engagement, it was discovered Mr. Kent had left for regions unknown—a vanquished hero, who received, as did Hugh Lyon, "his just deserts for playing with fire."

THE DUEL AND ITS RESULTS.

The whole company suddenly ceased its mirth and looked at the two men glaring angrily at each other across the table—the practised duellist and the fiery lad whom he had provoked into insulting him. And Colonel Duquesne grimly wiped the wine from his eyes and his grizzled whiskers.

Then he said, as coolly as a judge pronouncing the death sentence—

"This night's work shall cost you your heart's blood, Mr. Delancey. You will fight of course?"

And Harry Delancey, though his look was no whit less fierce as he answered, proudly—

"That is what I meant, sir," yet in his heart he knew that his enemy was right.

The quarrel would probably cost him his life.

Before he came to the supper that night, Harry Delancey had sworn again and again to himself that he would avoid a quarrel with Colonel Duquesne.

For both were suitors for the hand of beautiful Kate Granger, and Harry well knew that it was his rival's ardent desire to call him out and shoot him, that he might have the better opportunity to prosecute his suit with the wealthy heiress.

So when he went to Mr. Fletcher's that evening, Harry had promised himself that he would keep his temper.

And this was the end of it all.

The cunning colonel sat opposite to him, and flung sarcasm across the table until the young

man, heated with wine and stung beyond endurance, had dashed his glass in his enemy's face.

That was a company of men whose army experience had by no means lessened their devotion to the code of honor, and arrangements for a meeting were made at once.

Two hours after this little scene, Harry sat in his room, thinking over the events of the evening.

So he was to go out at sunrise, and be shot down like a dog by a man who never yet missed his mark—he, Harry Delancey, young, rich, and talented.

Life had never seemed so fair to him as to-night.

Bitterly did he curse himself for his folly.

Yet why should he thus play into the hands of his rival?

He would not fight him—it was unfair—it was monstrous for him, who hardly knew how to handle a pistol, to stand up against a skilled marksman who thirsted for his blood.

It should not be.

But what else was left him?

Flight?

Ah, no! better death a thousand times.

Apology?

Never!

No, nothing to do but to submit.

A letter to the girl he loved, another to his mother, who was even now fondly dreaming of her absent boy—then a few hours of feverish sleep, and then—well, he would think of it no longer lest he persuade himself to play the dastard.

Now for the letters.

First he wrote to his mother a tender, loving epistle; and his manly tears bedewed the paper as he begged her to forgive him the sorrow he must bring upon her.

His other letter was scarcely less difficult to write.

He had gone to Kate Granger that every evening, gone to her with the intention of avowing his passion.

But some coldness in her manner, real or fancied, had discouraged him, and when they parted, their adieux were as studied as those of mere acquaintances.

She evidently cared nothing for him; and yet he was to be shot at daylight to-morrow because he had loved her.

Well, well, there was a grim kind of consolation in writing and telling her the whole story, how madly he worshipped her, and how death was quite welcome to him since he was naught to her.

She would get the letter in the morning; and maybe her heart would smite her a little when she read the words penned by a hand that would then be rigid in death.

This was the substance of his letter to Kate; and having written it, he sealed them both and left them on the table, knowing that his servant would post them in the morning.

Then he threw himself, without undressing, upon the bed and sank into a feverish slumber.

Never was a more beautiful sunrise, never a bluer sky, never a fairer scene than the little open space of field and flower which was that morning to witness the encounter between two men, each eager for the other's blood.

Alfred Johnson, Harry's friend and second, had called him promptly at five, and the two had quickly mounted their horses and started for the spot.

Harry had managed to get a good hour of refreshing slumber towards morning, and now, though his brow was pale, there was no quiver of the lip nor trembling of the hand.

He had not the slightest doubt that he was going out to his execution, and this very feeling of certainty made him more careless and less nervous than he might otherwise have been.

He had made up his mind to die, and to die like a man.

Kate should at least know that of him.

But with this determination came a fierce hope that his adversary might not come off entirely unharmed.

He said to himself that he would be perfectly cool, and Duquesne, practised duellist as he was, should find that another ear was as swift as his own to catch the signal, and another finger as quick as his to pull the trigger.

Such were Harry Delancey's thoughts as he stood leaning upon the shoulder of his horse, while the distances were marked off and the preliminaries arranged.

And Colonel Duquesne? This was not the first or even the twentieth time he had found himself in a similar position.

There were many graves of his making.

He was known to have killed his man three times.

He stood there a short distance from his adversary, carelessly cutting at the daisies with his riding whip.

No one could doubt his courage, yet it was that sort of courage born of brutality and confidence in one's own success which really brave men little admire in their fellows.

The two parties now drew nearer together to learn the conditions.

Fate had given Delancey the most favorable position; he was to stand with his back to the sun.

But the colonel's grey eyes flashed contemptuously at the announcement.

The glare of the sun would hardly spoil his aim with the man he hated, with the hatred of jealousy, under his pistol.

"Very well," he said; "but, gentlemen, be as expeditious as possible. I breakfast at seven," and he nonchalantly took out his watch to note the time.

"Cannot the affair be settled peaceably? Must the fight go on?"

It was Gower, Duquesne's second, who spoke. He was an old soldier, who enjoyed nothing better than a duel; yet he pitied the inexperience of Delancey, and would fain have stopped the affair even now.

Harry still maintained a sullen indifference, and paid no heed to the question.

From him the two seconds looked eagerly at Duquesne for an answer to Gower's question.

But there was no show of relenting in the colonel's face.

He simply said—

"Mr. Delancey grossly insulted me last evening. I will wipe out his heart's blood as readily as I did the wine he threw in my face."

The cold-blooded cruelty of the man stung young Johnson to madness.

"By Heaven, sir!" he shouted, "but you cannot so easily wipe out the stain of murder from your soul; and hark ye, sir, if Harry Delancey goes down before you to-day, you shall answer to me for his life."

The sneer deepened upon Duquesne's lips, as he answered—

"As you will, sir; it is a matter of indifference to me. But we waste time."

So the pistols were drawn, and the two men took their stand face to face.

It would have been difficult to say which was the least affected by the situation.

For while Duquesne moved and acted with perfect coolness, Harry now appeared not only perfectly unconcerned for his own safety, but actually eager for the contest.

He seemed all at once to have gained confidence in himself and his cause.

"One!"

As Gower began to count, the men covered each other with their pistols; and there was a steadiness about the younger man's arm, that gave his opponent a feeling of vague uneasiness.

"Two!"

The men stood looking fiercely along their weapons, into each other's eyes.

Yet no one would have suspected from the demeanor of either, that life was at stake.

"Three! Fire!"

The words came in quick succession, and in a succession as rapid, one after the other, came the reports of the two pistols.

But Harry's ear had caught the hiss of the consonant in the last word, almost before it was uttered, and it was his ball that had first gone its way.

As the faint smoke cleared away, the colonel was seen to take one step forward, erect and firm.

Then his hand went confusedly to his head, and he fell forward on the grass, dead.

Harry, on the other hand, letting go the pistol from his nerveless fingers, dropped his arm, all shattered, at his side.

Otherwise he was uninjured.

He stood a moment, almost doubting the reality of the result; then, without a word, he turned and walked away to his horse, followed by his friend, and one of the surgeons.

They rode rapidly back to town, and at the house steps, the wounded man fainted from loss of blood.

He was carried up to his room, and the ball safely extracted.

Almost at the same moment that the surgeon finished dressing Harry Delancey's wound, Kate Granger sat idling over her breakfast.

She was evidently unhappy, for her food lay before her quite untouched, and she sighed repeatedly.

At length she pushed back her chair, and rang the bell impatiently.

"Ovid," she said to the old family servant, who entered, "have the letters come?"

"Yes, Miss Granger," was the answer.

"Very well, go out and see if there are any for me, and if so, bring them in at once."

The man vanished and presently returned with the letter Harry Delancey had written the night before.

Miss Granger recognised the handwriting at a glance, and eagerly tore open the envelope.

The first few lines she read with a half-pleased expression.

For in them Harry had told, in excited terms, what she scarcely dared to hope, that he loved her.

Then, as she read on, her brow grew anxious, and then all at once she threw down the letter and uttered a cry of anguish.

"Oh, my Harry, my Harry!" was all she said, as she rocked herself back and forth.

Then she eagerly snatched up the letter again as though she had found a hope; but once more she threw it aside with a disappointed cry.

"Oh, my God! at sunrise this morning, and I can do nothing. Long before this that fiend has killed him. But no, God would not permit such injustice. Something may have happened to prevent it. I will go to him dead or alive. Oh, my darling! Would that I had known."

She started up and rang the bell violently. "Have the carriage at the door in five minutes," she almost screamed to the affrighted servant, and then hurried to her room, leaving him to execute her orders.

When she came down, however, the carriage was not to be seen, and unable longer to bear the suspense, calling a girl to attend her, she hurried away on foot.

Arrived at the house, she, with white lips, demanded of the astonished domestic the whereabouts of Mr. Delancey.

"He was carried up to his room in a lifeless condition an hour ago."

She turned cold as stone, but did not faint nor cry out.

"Please show us his room," she said, quietly. And, still accompanied by her maid, she followed the domestic up the stairs.

A moment after she stood on the threshold of Delancey's room, looking, not as she had expected, upon that gentleman's corpse, but upon that gentleman himself, alive and as well as could be expected under the circumstances.

He looked up at her in astonished delight. "Really, Miss Granger, this is kind," he was beginning to say, but was interrupted by her uttering a great cry of joy, and swooning completely away in the arms of her attendant. The reaction had been too much for her.

"That letter," thought Harry, as he looked over at the table and found it gone.

Three months after his arm was perfectly well again, and he called upon Miss Granger, and learning that she was in the conservatory, he sought her there.

He found her cutting flowers for a bouquet she had intended to send him, and on his entrance she turned with a flush of joy on her lovely face.

"Kate," he said, "I have come to learn my fate. Will you be my wife?"

She paused a moment, then flung herself into his arms.

In another month Harry stood at the altar with Kate Granger, and he has never yet regretted the duel and its results.

THE RUBY AND THE ROSE.

He was the lord of Merlinton tower,
And I was but of low degree;
She had her beauty for her dower,
No other treasure needed she;
He came, when hawthorns were a-flower,
And strove to steal my love from me.

Oh! she was sweeter than the wind
That bloweth over Indian Isles;
As April bright, than June more kind,
Fawn-wild, and full of winsome wiles.
And I, alas! had learnt to find
My only life beneath her smiles.

He sent my love a ruby rare,
That might have graced imperial brows,
No gem had I. To deck her hair,
I sent her—but a simple rose;
And prayed her, on a night, to wear
The gift of him whose love she chose.

"Come, queen of all my heart's desire!
Crown me or slay! My soul is stirred
To challenge fate. My pulses tire
Of fear's chill tremor. Sings the bird
Of hope for him who dares aspire?
A lover's scroll, and wild of world!"

We watched her coming, he and I,
With utter dread my heart stood still.
The moon's wan crescent waned on high,
The nightingale had sung his fill,
In the dim distance seemed to die
The echo of his latest trill.

The flower-trailed gate, our tryst of old,
Gleamed whitely 'neath the clustering bloom
Of the dusk-starring jasmine. Cold
His shadow fell, a ghostly gloom
Lurked where it lay. Oh heart o'er bold!
Hast thou but hastened utter doom?

A still cold smile slept on his face,
That all my hope to anguish froze;
Then, in the silence of the place,
We heard her flower-pied porch unclose,
And—in her hair's silk-soft embrace,
There nestled warm a ripe-red rose!

IN THE PRIORY GARDEN.

A quaint old-fashioned garden it is, with straight grassy avenues, long mossy alleys between prim hedges of box and holly, smooth vistas opening to the sun and breeze, with here and there a sombre yew trained into some curious device. Banks of fragrant, world-forgotten flowers, stone ledges, and low, broken, ivy walls, remains of bygone days when the old garden was covered by a stately monastery, are distinctive features.

The purple twilight was stealing softly down, wrapping in its dusky silent wings the gorgeous orange, crimson, and violet that still flecked the mid-summer sky, one single brilliant star shining in the clear amber of the sunset, a bird's full clear note sounding far in the evening stillness.

A tall graceful girl, in a long trailing white dress, was pacing slowly down one of the narrow mossy alleys; in one hand she held a bunch of scarlet geraniums, the other was swinging a large garden hat carelessly up and down by its blue ribbons. A fair, fresh wilful face it was, with sweet violet eyes. A knot of the geraniums nestled in the thick folds of wavy brown hair; a scarf of soft white wool was tied loosely round her throat; and by her side walked a large staghound, stately and sedate, his nose pushed against his mistress's hand, his splendid wistful eyes following every movement. A man's mellow tenor voice sounded faintly through the trees, coming nearer and nearer.

A shadow crossed the girl's face, the rosy mouth pouted involuntarily.

"Ah, Hero," said she, looking down at her dog, "there he is again, and singing that same everlasting song; it is always 'My queen, my queen,' Listen, Hero, listen."

The voice, nearer now, came on singing in subdued, tender tones a verse of the well-known song:

"I will not dream of her tall and stately—
She that I love may be fairly light;
I will not say she should walk sedately;
Whatever she does, it will sure be right.

And she may be humble or proud, my lady,
Or that sweet calm which is just between—"

"Ah, Hero, old fellow," interrupted the girl, impatiently, "it is always the same old thing. How I hate! 'Whatever she does, it will sure be right!'—and I never do anything right in his eyes! But, at any rate, you believe in me, old fellow—don't you? In your faithful eyes I am beautiful and gentle and courteous in everything, if I am not in Errol's."

The dog looked up with his beautiful wistful eyes; the man's voice came nearer and clearer. "There, we won't listen any more, will we, old dog? At least I have one friend who is not always singing at me, or looking unutterable disapprobation at me."

She stooped and took hold of one of the dog's soft silky ears. The voice came softly through the high box hedge; it was close to her now, every word distinct:

"But she must be courteous, she must be holy,
Pure in her spirit, that maiden I love."

"'Courteous,' 'holy'—and I am such a terrible reprobate! Come away, Hero." And the girl started up, and began walking swiftly away down the avenue.

But she was too late—a few steps brought her face to face with the singer, who emerged, quietly unconscious of her proximity, from a side walk. A tall brown-faced young fellow he was, with bright dark eyes and clearly-cut features, and an expression indicative of power and determination, relieved only by the frank kindness of the eyes and smile.

"Ah, cousin mine, I have been looking for you all over the garden," said he, stopping before the girl. "Where have you been to all alone?"

"Hero and I have been to the Lady's Well—we are tired of the garden," replied she, pettishly.

"No wonder you were not to be found, then. Why did you not tell me, Nellie? It was too late for you to go into the wood alone."

"I had Hero—he is quite sufficient escort. I do not care for any other when he is with me, thank you, Errol. We like to be alone best," rejoined Nellie, accompanying her words with a swift glance, to see how they would be received.

The hint was too broad to be misunderstood, but the only reply was a keen look of inquiry at Nellie's vexed face, and a slight smile as he caught her eyes. He turned to walk on with her, and the two paced slowly on past the high prim hedges, past banks of flowers, drooping as day drooped too, on into a garden—nay, a wilderness—of roses. The dew was brushed off by Nellie's long dress, a subtle, delicious perfume filled the air. Gradually the host of stars appeared in the deep blue sky, a blackbird's clear note rose high and sweet. Unconsciously Errol began to sing softly the refrain of his song:

"She is standing somewhere, she I would honor,
She that I wait for—my queen, my queen,"

Nellie turned round.

"I do wish, Errol, you would not sing that song; I hate it!"

"Hate it! Why, Nellie, it is charming!"

"I don't care; I hate it! It is always 'my queen'!"

"Well, is there any special reason why it should not be 'my queen'?" said he, looking down at her and smiling quietly. "Don't you see, cousin mine, she is a sort of ideal—"

"Yes, I do see," interrupted Nellie, pettishly; "and I always did dislike poetic ideals and absolute perfection; and I hate the song, and I wish you would not sing it!"

"Of course I will not, if it annoys you so much," said he, with another keen glance at the fair, wilful face; "but I want to argue the point with you first. Here is our old nook under the Noisette; sit down, Nellie, and let me convince you as I used to do in the old days."

Inwardly resolving not to be convinced, Nellie sat down on the low stone wall, the climbing roses around and above her appearing like a framework. Errol strolled away to a large rose-bush a few paces distant, and carefully cut off a splendid half-opened Provence rose, which in its creamy pinkness contained a world of delicate, subtle scent; then, returning, he threw himself on the grass at Nellie's feet, and looked up into the sweet, wilful face.

"Now, tell me, Nellie, why you don't like 'My Queen.'"

A shower of scarlet geranium petals fell over the white dress, scattered ruthlessly by Nellie's fingers; but she had no argument ready to support her dislike—at least, none that she would use.

"She is a charming ideal," continued Errol.

"What have you to say against her, Nellie?"

"Just that she is an ideal," answered Nellie, shortly.

"And you cannot attain such a height?" asked he, quietly, but with a keener glance than ever at the face above him.

No answer came from the pouting lips. The scarlet blossoms almost covered the white dress; the evening breeze came up and stirred the roses; a shower of pure-tinted leaves fell on the scarlet. Errol changed his position slightly.

Raising himself with one hand, he held the rose towards her with the other.

"Nellie," said he, gently—"Nellie."

"Yes."

"Will you give me your geraniums for this rose?" he inquired.

"No," she replied.

"Why not?" interrogated Errol.

"I like the geraniums better," said Nellie, promptly, her eyes turned away from his.

"I don't think you do—they are so very battered. Won't you make the exchange, Nellie?"

She stole a glance at him. There was no mistaking his meaning. The geraniums were only a small part of what was wanted. A soft light flashed into the violet eyes; for a moment she hesitated, and then, in a sudden fit of wilful perversity, she said, sarcastically:

"You do me too much honor, cousin Errol; but I do not choose to be second even to an ideal. Your 'queen' is waiting somewhere; let me suggest that you give the rose to her."

"My 'queen' is here—I found her long ago. Her throne is this old stone seat, her canopy the thorny white rose, her sceptre a bunch of flaming battered geraniums. Will you take my rose, Nellie? It is not courteous to keep me waiting so long."

His last words stung Nellie. It seemed to her that to accept the rose so offered would be a token of submission, a confession of her own shortcomings. She would none of it. The wilful eyes flashed defiantly at him, as she said, perversely:

"No, thanks, I prefer my flaming geraniums, battered as they are."

"As you will, cousin Nellie," was the quiet reply, and the rose was withdrawn.

The bird's clear notes ceased suddenly; the night wind came up and shivered among the roses; it seemed to have grown suddenly dark. Nellie drew her scarf closer round her shoulders.

"Let us go in," she said; "it is cold."

A week later Errol and Nellie stood in the vine-covered porch of the old Priory. A pile of rugs, walking-sticks, and portmanteaus lay on one side; a dog-cart stood before the door, and the man-servant was busily stowing away the luggage, which was labeled "New York."

"Why are you going, Errol?" asked Nellie, shyly.

"Partly for business, partly for pleasure, cousin mine."

"What is the business?"

"A special suit, which I do not wish to lose if I can help it."

"And the pleasure?"

He gave her a keen, quick glance before he answered.

"The pleasure? Well, at present the pleasure is to gain that particular suit. My adversary is rather obstreperous, but my journey to America will give time for reflection and I think the matter will be amicably arranged. What shall I bring you back, Nellie—an Indian wampum, or the last Yankee notion in bonnet?"

"Neither, thank you, Errol," she said, raising her sweet eyes, half mischievously, half repudiantly; "I should prefer a bear-skin and—a bunch of scarlet geraniums."

"Your wishes shall be obeyed. Good-bye, Nellie," said he, gravely, as, springing up into the dog-cart, he took the reins. "Good-bye."

Nellie watched the dog-cart out of sight, and then turned into the house, feeling guilty, defiant, repentant, and mischievous half a dozen times before she reached her mother's room.

"Ah, my queen, you are very wilful," thought Errol, as he turned his horse into the lane; "but my rose shall win the day yet. I can afford to wait till the tree blooms again next summer."

In the old garden Nellie watched the roses bloom and pass away, the beautiful golden autumn tints come and fade and the green ivy winter draw near and settle on the land. Her life with her invalid mother was a lonely one—this winter had seemed specially dreary and long; she watched with intense longing for the first gleam of spring. It lingered long, as if loth to encounter the chilly winds and weather. The snowdrops came in March; at the end of April there was scarcely a hedgerow tinted with green.

"Nellie," said Mrs. Carroll one morning, looking up from her newspaper, "find me Errol's last letter and see what is the name of the vessel he intended to sail in."

"It was the *City of Boston*, mamma."

"Get the letter, dear—I want to be quite certain."

Nellie opened the writing-desk, found the letter, and gave it to Mrs. Carroll, pointing over her shoulder to a certain passage in it.

"Yes, I see you are right; it is the *City of Boston*. I had forgotten all about it; and now I see from the newspaper that she is very much overdue, and that there is great anxiety about her safety."

Nellie had not forgotten. Since the date of the vessel's sailing had she not counted the days, the hours, almost the minutes? Had not every chance footstep sent the blood to her cheeks, every unexpected knock or ring caused her heart to beat wildly? Latterly, did not every slight noise jar upon the strained nerves almost painfully? No need had she to find the letter for names and dates, when her heart was aching with vague suspicion and dread, her cheeks thin and pale with anxious waiting and watching. Alas! she was not the only one. With that day, when the first warning appeared in the pa-

pers, began a time when her own fears were echoed by hundreds of sad hearts all over England.

Once more it was a fair summer evening in the old Priory garden; the purple twilight shadows were falling softly, and a bird's high note sounded far in the stillness as in bygone days. Terribly cruel it all seemed to Nellie that the brightness and beauty could last while hearts should be so desolate. She was pacing restlessly up and down the moss-grown avenue, her black dress clinging to her in sombre folds—for the months had come and gone, and hope at last had died out. Hero walked beside her, his head drooping. Presently she left the alley and sought the old stone seat under the Noisette rose. She threw herself down on the grass beside it, and pressed her cheek against the cold stone. It was piteous to see how pale and thin she had grown—piteous to see the small hands pressed to her breast to still the convulsive sobs that shook her slight fragile figure.

"Oh, Errol, where are you?" she said, despairingly. "Can't you hear me, Errol? In all the world above is there no spot where you can hear me?" The rose-leaves fluttered down over her in a white shower as they had done a year ago—far away in the dusky thicket the blackbird's clear note rang out. She shivered as a rose-leaf fell on her hand. "And I grieved you so, Errol, that night, I remember it all; and now you can hear me no more, and I can never tell you that I loved you. Oh, my love, my love! How cruel it is—how pitiless!"

The poor little white face worked and quivered with convulsed sobs, and she burst into a wild passion of weeping. All those weary months of waiting she had no tears from the wide-open miserable eyes; now they came so irresistibly, so passionately, that the slight figure shook like the leaves above her.

"Nellie," said a low voice—"Nellie."

She started and moaned as if the sound were heard in a dream, and the drooping bright head was not raised.

"Nellie," said the voice again, and she was presently raised from her crouching position by a man's strong arms. The dark eyes that eagerly sought hers were glistening with emotion, the face, was almost as agitated as her own.

"Errol," she cried—"Errol!"

Her face was so ghastly in its incredulous recognition, her eyes were so wildly unbelieving, that he spoke as quickly as possible.

"I was not in the ship, Nellie. My name was in the list of passengers by mistake."

"Is it you, Errol?" she asked, and she gave one long searching glance, and put out her hand to touch him.

"Yes, Nellie, it is I. I was prevented from sailing in the *City of Boston*, thank God!" said he, reverently.

He took the poor little trembling hands in one of his, with the other he put her on the old seat. Her sweet violet eyes filled afresh with tears, but with such tears of grateful thankfulness as those who have come out of the valley of the shadow of death only can know, and for a few minutes the solemn prayerful silence was unbroken. At last Nellie spoke, with the reverent tone of one who has just held some sacred communion.

"How was it, Errol?" she asked.

"I had taken my passage on board the *City of Boston*," he explained, "but at the last moment a party of friends persuaded me to join them on a hunting expedition to the Rocky Mountains. We were away four months; and all that time I received no letters or newspapers, as we moved about so rapidly from place to place that they were not forwarded to us. When I reached New York on my way home, I heard about the loss of the vessel. I was horror-struck to think of what you might have suffered. I set sail in the first steamer. Thank heaven I am at home in safety at last!"

"Why did not you write, Errol?"

"I did; but I suppose my letters went down with the vessel. I would have given anything to save you this, Nellie."

"I know it," said Nellie, softly. With serious, awe-struck eyes she looked up through the rose-boughs; one bright star gleamed down upon her with kindly light, like a radiant messenger of sympathy.

"I want my welcome home, Nellie," said Errol, presently.

She glanced at him with sweet, shy eyes.

"Have I found 'my queen' at last?"

"Yes," whispered Nellie, softly.

He folded her in his arms, and kissed her passionately on lips, brow, and cheeks, and then, drawing her head on his shoulder, let her pale pure face rest there. Her little fingers went wandering over his coat—the very touch of the rough tweed cloth gave such intense relief, comfort, and delight. After a while she raised her head and spoke:

"Cousin Errol?"

"Yes, cousin Nellie."

"Did you win the law-suit?"

"Yes, fair lady; I have won my suit. My adversary has succumbed at last," said he, significantly.

"Was there not really one?"

"Do not inquire too closely, Nellie mine. The answer may be embarrassing. At least I have remembered your request," said Errol, producing his pocket-book, and taking therefrom a handful of withered flowers, which still, despite their dryness, retained a portion of vivid coloring.

I gathered these wild geraniums one moonlight night while we were watching for a grizzled on Mount Columbar." Raising one arm, he pulled a rose from the branch above Nellie's

head. "Now which will you have, Nellie?" asked he, offering her the geraniums in one hand and the rose in the other.

Nellie hesitated, glanced up shyly, hesitated again, and then stretched out her hand to the rose.

"And I'll give my heart to my lady's keeping, And ever her strength on mine shall lean And the stars shall fall, and the angels be weeping, Ere I cease to love her, my queen, my queen!"

sang Errol as they sauntered home through the old garden, with the shadows falling softly around them, the stars looking down, the calm majestic presence of the night sympathizing with the deep unutterable gratitude which filled their hearts with reverence and awe unspeakable.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

CREAKING BOOTS.—Stand them in the salt and water over the soles for 24 hours.

A NEW METHOD OF PRESERVING NEW MANURIAL MATTERS consists of mixing burnt gypsum with them and moulding into bricks.

FLOOR OIL-CLOTHS.—Have the dust wiped from them often; but use soap and scrubbing-brush seldom, as they wear off the paint. Use no hot water.

A HORSE LEFT UNCOVERED when not in exercise will soon grow a heavy coat of coarse hair. This becomes a hindrance to rapid motion, and should be prevented by judicious blanketing.

To detect nitric acid in wines it is necessary to saturate the wine with baryta and then distill; phosphoric acid is added to the residue and redistilled, when the acetic will be found in the distillate.

TO CLEAN MARBLE.—To cleanse marble stained with iron rust, apply lemon-juice to it with a clean rag and wash with warm water. If soiled with dirt, wash it with soap and Paris white.

FURNITURE OIL.—Mix half a pint of olive oil with a pound of soft soap. Boil them well, and apply the mixture to your oiled furniture with a piece of dry cotton wool. Polish with a soft, dry flannel.

FOR BLEACHING MUSLIN.—One pound of chloride of lime to forty yards of muslin; soak the muslin in soft water over night, melt the lime in a pot of water; then put the muslin in for half an hour; then rinse three times; soak in soft water over night; then hang out to dry.

TO POLISH TINS.—First rub your tins with a dry cloth; then take dry flour and rub it on with your hands; afterwards, take an old newspaper and rub the flour off, and the tins will shine as well as if half an hour had been spent rubbing them with brick dust or powder, which spoils the hands.

An old umbrella supported on a stick driven into the ground affords an excellent shelter from the frost for small trees and shrubs. A galvanised iron cage of similar shape has recently been introduced for this purpose; it has only to be covered with cloth or paper to complete the arrangement.

MUSTARD PLAISTER.—In making a mustard plaster no water whatever should be used, but the mustard mixed with the white of an egg; the result will be a plaster which will "draw" perfectly, but will not produce a blister even upon the skin of an infant, no matter how long it is allowed to remain upon the part.

ALUM water applied hot is said to destroy red and black cockroaches, spiders, and all the crawling pests that infest our houses. The alum water should be applied with a brush to all wood-work where insects are suspected. Powdered alum or borax is useful for travellers to carry with them, to scatter about when they suspect there may be troublesome visitors.

An old farmer said: "When I die, I am going to leave behind me, as a heritage for my children, the home where they were born, made as beautiful as my means and educated taste would allow; pleasant memories of the home fireside, and of the sunny summer days, and a true regard for the dignity and worthiness of the calling which their father followed." It is a capital legacy.

A GOOD TABLE SAUCE.—Take one gallon of tomatoes, wash and simmer in three quarts of water until nearly done; strain through a sieve; add two tablespoonfuls of each of these spices, ginger, mace, black pepper, allspice and salt, and one of cayenne pepper; boil down to one quart; pour in one-half pint best vinegar, and then pass through a hair sieve. Bottle in half-pint bottles; cork and seal securely, and keep in a cool place.

M. GAUDIN has been making experiments to supersede borax, which is generally employed in soldering, and the result is that he finds that an excellent flux for soldering iron, and brazing copper and aluminum bronze, is obtained by a mixture of equal parts of cryolite and chloride of barium. Cryolite is a product and export of Greenland, and consists of a double fluoride of aluminum and sodium.

M. MILNE-EDWARDS, the well-known Parisian naturalist, has been studying *mélanism*, or the influence of climate in producing a black hue in the plumage of birds. He observes that the quantity of black in their feathers is regulated

by the regions in which they live, the tendency to *mélanism* being chief noticeable in the southern hemispheres, and particularly in New Zealand, Madagascar, and New Guinea.

VARNISH BY EVAPORATION.—Gutta-percha solved in ether is said, by Dr. Hoffman, to make an admirable transparent varnish for pictures and other sensitive objects of taste. Upon being applied to a surface the ether evaporates, leaving an exceedingly delicate and scarcely visible film, which can be washed with a moist cloth without harm. Applied to fine drawings through a vaporizer, this composition renders them ineffaceable.

CLEANSING LACE.—Point, or any kind of fine lace, may be cleansed easily by soaking it in a preparation of sapoline and warm water. If this is not procurable, ammonia may be used with almost equal effect. Let it soak till fit to rinse in pure warm water; then lay it on the ironing-board over clean linen, and iron lightly on the wrong side with a cool iron. Afterward pin the lace on the linen-covered board, inserting a pin in every open loop to keep the pattern clear.

HOW TO KEEP BUTTER COOL.—Get a large flour pot, plug up the hole with a sound cork and seal it. Now put a quarter-brick or other square, heavy body in the bottom, to serve as a support for a second, but smaller pot, which must be plugged up in the same manner. Place a dish under the outer pot, and cover with any cover you please, provided it be not metallic. Now fill the space between the inner and outer pot with water. The butter will keep as firm as a rock, as cool as a cucumber.

In the Transactions of the Highland Agricultural Society various waste residues are described as important. Blood may be used as manure; it contains one per cent, of phosphoric acid. Flesh, fish, hair, wool, and glue refuse may be used, as also the "trotter-scutch" from tanneries, a mixture of skin and hair. Refuse hops contain from two to four per cent, of potential ammonia. Sugar-bollers' scum contains both nitrogen and phosphates.

ENGRAVING IN RELIEF.—This is a substitute for wood engraving by deepening or hollowing out by means of acid the parts usually cut to the full depth required with a graver. The drawing is etched on the plate, and the raised parts obtained by a deposit of metal, then the parts in relief are covered with an acid resisting varnish, and the remaining parts are hollowed out to the required depth by means of acid, this process being repeated as often as necessary for producing the greatest depth required.

YOUNG ENGINEERS will find the following recipe a good one for polishing the brass-work of their engines. Rub the surface of the metal with rottenstone and sweet-oil, then rub off with a piece of cotton flannel and polish with soft leather. A solution of oxalic acid rubbed over tarnished brass soon removes the tarnish, rendering the metal bright. The acid must be washed off with water, and the brass rubbed with whitening and soft leather. A mixture of muriatic acid and alum dissolved in water imparts a golden color to brass articles that are steeped in it for a few seconds.

GLYCERINE AND CASTOR OIL.—The Philadelphia Medical Times has an article on this subject. It is stated that if castor-oil be mixed with an equal part of glycerine and one or two drops of oil of cinnamon to the dose, it can scarcely be recognized. The writer affirms that he has used this mixture a great number of times, and can confirm all that has been said of it. Children take it out of the spoon without difficulty, and it has been given to doctors without their discovering that they were taking castor-oil. This hint may be well worth acting upon, considering the nauseous character of castor-oil to most persons.

IMPROVED WOOD FENCE.—The stakes are used in pairs, set at such an inclination toward each other that they intersect or cross, and are placed at the usual distance apart to form a panel of fence. A rider is supported in the angles formed by the intersection, and an upright is placed centrally between each pair of stakes, with a rider extending across the top ends thereof. Braces are attached to the stakes at one end, while the other end rests beneath the lower angle of the latter, on the rider. The uprights are connected with the stakes by slats, and placed at an angle of fifteen degrees with the surface of the ground. Rails rest on these slats, and their ends lap past each other by placing them on opposite sides of the uprights. The fence is said to be straight, and proof against unruly stock, as well as high winds.

DIPHTHERIA.—A remedy for diphtheria has been brought prominently before the public in Victoria, Australia, by Mr. R. Greathead. In the first instance, Mr. Greathead offered to communicate to the Government a sovereign remedy for diphtheria, in consideration of a reward of £5,000. The matter was referred to the chief medical officer, Dr. McCree, but there were manifest difficulties in the way of testing Mr. Greathead's method; and the Government, of course, declined to enter into the speculation which he had invited. Thereupon, Mr. Greathead made public his remedy, which consists simply of the administration of four drops of pure sulphuric acid in a tumbler of water. Cases have since been reported in which the supposed specific is alleged to have operated successfully, but the cures have not been authenticated by medical men, and the value of the remedy is still a matter of doubt amongst laymen.

CAISSA'S CASKET.

SATURDAY, May 2nd, 1874.

* * All communications relating to Chess must be addressed "CHECKMATE," London, Ont.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. A. RODIER.—Your solution of No. 56 is quite correct. Should be pleased to hear from you regularly.

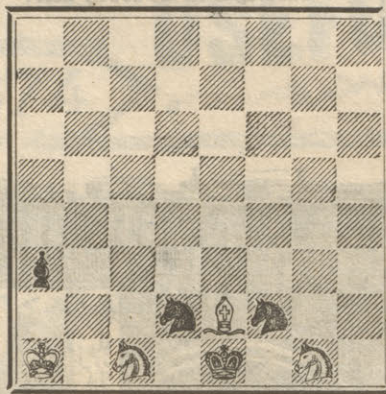
J. W. STANSTED.—The documents have been distributed as directed. Cannot promise the Association much from Lon on. A prob. now and then for the Casket would be in order.

CAISSAN CONUNDRUMS.

No. 59.

By L. T. BROWN.

BLACK.



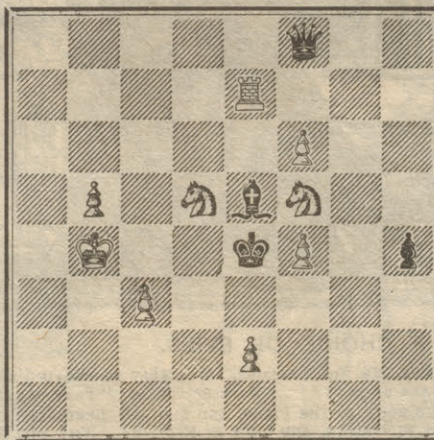
WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

No. 60.

By MISS ELIZA JANE HALL.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

CONUNDRUMS CRIBBLED.

No. 51.

White. Black.

1 B to K B 6th
2 Mate acc.

1 Any

No. 52.

White. Black.

1 B to Q B 4th
2 Q to Q 5th, ch
3 Kt or Q mates

1 K takes B
2 Any

(a.)

2 Q to Q 1st
3 Q mates

1 R takes B, etc.
2 Any

(b.)

2 Q to K 1st, ch
3 Mate

1 B takes Kt P
2 Moves

(c.)

2 P takes B
3 Mate.

1 R to Q or K 5th
2 Any

CAISSAN CONTESTS.

No. 26.

An elegant little affair contested some years ago between Messrs. Neumann and Schulten.

Ruy Lopez Kt's Game.

White. Black.

Mr. N.

Mr. S.

1 P to K 4th
2 Kt to K B 3rd
3 B to Q Kt 5th
4 P to Q B 3rd
5 Castles
6 P to Q 4th
7 P takes P

1 P to K 4th
2 Kt to Q B 3rd
3 B to Q 4th (a)
4 K Kt to K 2nd
5 Castles
6 P takes P
7 B to Q Kt 3rd

8 P to Q 5th
9 P to Q 6th
10 P to K 5th
11 K R to K 1st
12 B to K Kt 5th
13 B to Q B 4th ch
14 P takes K B P
15 Q takes R
16 Q to K 8 ch, and wins (c).

8 Kt to Q Kt 1st
9 Kt to K Kt 3rd (b)
10 Kt to Q B 3rd
11 K R to K 1st
12 P to K B 3rd
13 K to R 1st
14 R takes R, ch
15 P takes K B P

NOTES.

(a) Probably the worst defence to the Ruy Lopez that can be adopted.

(b) P takes P is the proper move.

(c) A beautiful and unexpected coup, which forces mate in a move or two.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Neumann, who, a few years ago, was looked upon as second to no player in Europe, should have so completely retired from the Chess arena, his name nowadays being rarely to be met with, even in the German and Austrian Chess magazines.

No. 27.

A smart little game recently contested in the Chicago Chess Club.

Bishop's Gambit.

White.

Black.

Dr. Spencer.

Mr. Hosmer.

1 P to K 4th
2 P to K B 4th
3 B to Q B 4th
4 Q to K 2nd
5 K to Q 1st
6 Q takes P, ch (b)
7 Kt to K B 3rd
8 R to K 1st
9 P to Q Kt 4th (c)
10 B to Q Kt 2nd
11 B takes Kt
12 Q takes K R P
13 Q to K 4th
14 Kt to Q B 3rd
15 Q to K 2nd
16 Kt takes Kt

1 P to K 4th
2 P takes P
3 P to K B 4th (a)
4 Q to K R 5th, ch
5 P takes P
6 B to K 2nd
7 Q to K Kt 5th
8 Kt to K B 3rd
9 P to Q R 3rd
10 K to Q 1st
11 R takes B
12 R to K 1st
13 P to Q 3rd
14 B to K B 4th
15 Kt to Q 5th (d)
16 B to K R 5th (e)

And White resigns.

NOTES.

(a) A defence recommended by Philidor.

(b) Mr. Neuman's move of Kt to Q B 3rd appears to be the strongest mode of proceeding with the attack.

(c) A novelty, and one which appears worth consideration.

(d) An excellent coup, to which there seems to be no satisfactory reply.

(e) This brilliant stroke of play changes in a moment the whole aspect of the game. White must now lose his Queen or be mated.

CAISSAN CHIPS.

We conclude our labors by gathering the "chips." It has been suggested that we open a correspondence tournament, and publish the games in the FAVORITE. How many of our readers think the coming season not too sultry for such a contest? Let us know at once.

Brother Brownson and good lady playing at chess forms the handsome picture that adorns the cover of the greatly improved, handsomely-printed Duquesne (Iowa) Chess Journal, for April.

Have we informed our readers of the painful event—the death of Ernest Morphy? Apoplexy carried off this able chess writer and his demise occurred at Quincy, Illinois on the 7th ult.

The Chess Journal presents to the world a new variation in the "slow" opening, called "Jerome's double gambit." It will in all probability prove to be practically, as it certainly is theoretically, unsound. The sacrifice of a Bishop and a Knight so early in a game as the 4th and 5th moves, can hardly be expected to afford equivalent advantage in position. After further examination we may possibly republish it in the FAVORITE, should we not see what we expect to see.

THERE is a story told about Holbeck Lunds chapel in Wensleydale, that some years ago, when the small bell in the little turret was either missing or broken, the clerk used to come down to the chapel on Sunday at the usual hour, and, thrusting his head through the hole where the bell had hung, cry out lustily, "Bol-lol, bol-lol, bol-lol!" in order to summon the parishioners to service.

In a pool across a road in the county of Tipperary is stuck up a pole, having affixed to it a board with this inscription:—"Take notice that when the water is over this board, the road is impassable."

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HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

"If a naughty girl should hurt you, like a good girl you would forgive her, wouldn't you?" "Yes, marm," she replied, "if I couldn't catch her."

ONE of our countrymen who has suffered declares that to carry letters of introduction to Englishmen doubles the terrors of crossing the Atlantic.

A CHICAGO man wrote to Agassiz that he had an apple which he had preserved for fifty-three years, and when Agassiz wrote for it, the joker said it was the apple of his eye.

CONSCIENCE doth make cowards of us all, particularly of a Michigander, who, on being arrested for larceny, promptly confessed to burglary, bigamy and infanticide.

BOSWELL observing to Johnson that there was no instance of a beggar dying for want in the streets of Scotland, "I believe, Sir, you are

very right," says Johnson; "but this does not arise from the want of beggars, but the impossibility of starving a Scotchman."

It is said that one of the editors of a New Orleans paper, soon after commencing to learn the printing business, went to see a preacher's daughter. The next time he attended meeting he was considerably astonished at hearing the minister announce as his text, "My daughter is grievously tormented with a devil."

"Does your arm pain you?" asked a witty Aberdeen lady of a gentleman, who, at a party, had thrown his arm across the back of her chair, so that it touched her shoulder. "No, madam, it doesn't pain me; but why do you ask?" "Oh, I noticed that it was out of place, sir; that's all." The arm was removed.

THE coming poet in Napoleon, O., warbles:—

"Tis midnight and the setting sun
Is rising in the wide, wide West.
The rapid rivers slowly run:
The frog is on his downy nest:

The pensive ghost and sportive cow
Hilarious hop from bough to bough."

A SCOTCH minister recently, in discoursing of a certain class of persons who were obnoxious to him, concluded with this singular peroration: "Ma freens, it is as impossible for a sinner to enter the kingdom o' heaven as for a coo to climb up a tree wi' her tail foremost and harry a crow's nest, or for a soo to sit on the top o' a thistle like a laverock."

THERE is a hearty vigor about Omaha journalism which suggests that that city is not yet an enervated centre of effete civilization. The editor of the Omaha Herald says that the wall-eyed scullion who fiddles and dances in the Plattsmouth Herald delivered a temperance lecture a few nights before, and that he is glad the lecturer was partially sober at the time, and not dripping drunk as usual.

A COUNTRY minister of "limited capacity" recently married for a second wife a widow of some property. Being an ardent servant of Mammon, a former neighbor asked him if he

did not do well by the second marriage? "O, yes, indeed," he said, with animation and then, as an expression of reverent awe stole into his face, he added, "and, what is very remarkable, the clothes of my wife's first husband just fit me."

NOT REMARKABLE.—A Massachusetts farmer says, "My cattle will follow me until I leave the lot, and on the way up to the barn-yard in the evening stop and call for a lock of hay." Smithson says there is nothing at all remarkable in that. He went into a barn-yard in the country one day last week, where he had not the slightest acquaintance with the cattle, and the old bull not only followed him till he left the lot, but took the gate off the hinges and raced with him to the house in the most familiar manner possible. Smithson says he has no doubt that the old fellow would have called for something if he had waited a little while, but he didn't want to keep the folks waiting dinner; so he hung one tail of his coat and a piece of his pants on the bull's horns, and went into the house.

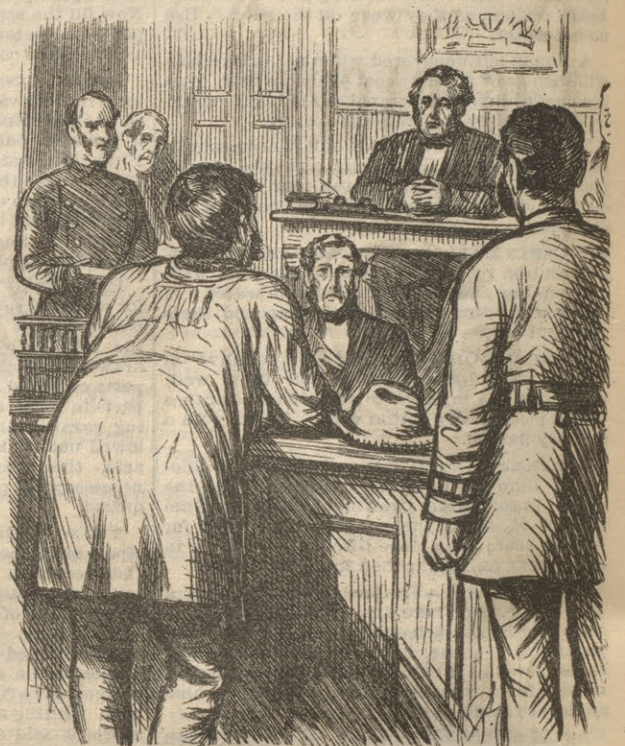


A CHOICE OF EVILS.

Fascinating Widow. "Now, THAT WE ARE ALONE, MR. SILVERTONGUE, AND LIKELY TO REMAIN UNDISTURBED FOR ANOTHER HALF-HOUR OR SO, I HAVE A VERY GREAT FAVOUR TO ASK OF YOU!" Amateur Vocalist. "PRAY—PRAY DO?"

Fascinating Widow. "WILL YOU, WILL YOU SIT DOWN TO THE PIANO, AND SING ME BEETHOVEN'S 'ADELAIDA' RIGHT THROUGH, FROM BEGINNING TO END, FIRST IN GERMAN, THEN IN ITALIAN, AND THEN IN ENGLISH! WILL YOU, MR. SILVERTONGUE?"

[Much flattered, the gifted warbler complies, and little dreams that the fair one's sole object in getting him to sing is to escape from the tedium of his conversation.]



THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC.

Magistrate. "YOU SAY, PRISONER, YOU'VE A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE CONSTABLE. WHAT IS IT?" Prisoner. "PLEASE, SIR, HE TOOK ME UNAWARES, SIR!"



BITTER.

Discontented Caddy (to Ladies, who, wishing to get rid of their small change, have tendered him one fourpenny piece, two threepenny ditto, one penny, one halfpenny, and two farthings—the sum total amounting to his proper fare). "WELL! 'OW LONG MIGHT YER BOTH A' BEEN A SAVIN' UP FOR THIS LITTLE TREAT?"



A STUDY OF INDECISION.

Stout Party (to himself). "H'M! UNDER, OR OVER?—THAT IS THE QUESTION!"